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# A Gendered Approach to Security and Violence in Refugee Camps

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A Gendered Approach to Security and Violence in Refugee Camps

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to explore the connection between the lack of security and increase of gender based violence in refugee camps. There are several factors that contribute to insecurity in refugee camps including but not limited to overcrowding, inadequate supplies of food and fuel sources, inadequate, ineffective, and under staffing and the physical layouts of camps. Many of these factors are the causes of the others and vice versa as well as have other consequences for refugees. All of these factors contribute to violence against refugees directly and indirectly. Furthermore, my research will illustrate how these factors also impede other refugee rights and exacerbate the challenges refugees face daily. Current international policies and law often conflict with national policies and law that are put in place to protect refugees. Both are cited to ensure refugee rights and protection but often do the opposite and instead protect the interests of the state. Attempts to create solutions to many of the issues in refugee camps or address the impacts of them have been made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the international community, and NGOs, however they have been widely ineffective or not considered all aspects of the problem.

## Introduction

According to international standard, specifically the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Refugee Convention), which remains the basis for refugee law, a refugee is defined as any person who

“As a result of events occurring before 1 January 1951 and owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him [or her]self of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his [or her] former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it” (UNHCR, 2005, 5).

This definition is further complemented by regional instruments such as the 1969 Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Refugee Convention or 1969 Refugee Convention) and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees. Both of these instruments describe that refugees, under certain circumstances, are classified as persons fleeing indiscriminate harm or threats from the situation in their country of origin (UNHCR, 2005). Once groups or individuals are defined or fit this category of refugee they are entitled to certain benefits and rights, by international refugee and human rights law. These are inclusive but not limited to physical security, access to courts, physical and material needs, freedom of movement, reunification, special measures for particularly vulnerable refugees, education and etc. Since many of these standards of treatment are based on customary

international law, states party to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which extended the scope of the Convention, and even those that are not bound are expected to uphold these rights, standard and treatment (UNHCR, 2005).

Using this understanding of refugee as a concept and its complexity, the purpose of my study will be to address security in refugee camps. I will specifically examine current security provisions in relation to violence and gender. It will explore different approaches to security. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a frequent occurrence within refugee camps. Therefore, I will investigate how security in refugee camps connects to gendered outcomes of violence. This paper will study current policies in refugee camps and a lack thereof implementation and/ or implications. It will also analyze why SGBV, such as sexual assault against women, is a frequent occurrence within refugee camps. In order to do so, this study will look at what security looks like in and outside refugee camps. What is personal security for refugees like in camps? How can security within refugee camps be better addressed? What's being done to currently prevent SGBV in refugee camps and how are these cases handled in camps? Moreover, I will do so through the lens of a specific case study of Tanzania. While this topic will be addressed through the context of Tanzania, my research will attempt to be indicative of patterns that reemerge in camps in Turkey, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Zambia, Eritrea, Sweden and etc. In turn, my research will be crosscutting despite circumstance. A focus on Tanzania, however, will allow me to deeply analyze factors that cause as well as are a result of violence and insecurity in refugee camps.

Refugees are oftentimes provided shelter in a refugee camp, which is defined as “a temporary settlement built to receive refugees and people in refugee-like situations. Refugee camps usually accommodate displaced persons who have fled their home country, but there are

also camps for internally displaced persons” (Source?). As UNHCR puts it “shelter is a vital survival mechanism in times of crisis or displacement. It is also key to restoring personal security, self-sufficiency and dignity (UNHCR, 2001-2017). A part of UNHCR’s main protection mission is to provide adequate shelter in humanitarian crises. Currently, there are over 2.6 million refugees living in camps worldwide and have been displaced for five years and others for over a generation. The reality is that while refugee camps are supposed to be a temporary solution, it often becomes a long-term living arrangement for those fleeing conflict. UNHCR provides tents, plastic sheeting and mats, fund the rehabilitation of communal shelters or constructions of new homes and or provide the displaced with materials to build shelters themselves. While housing or shelter is provided to refugees in urban and rural in different forms, the common factor that remains is that conditions are substandard and even providing these provisions poses major challenges (UNHCR, 2001-2017).

In this context security, protection and SGBV will be defined in different ways. Security in this study refers to personal security as well as national security. When discussing personal security, I refer to physical protection of refugees or something that poses imminent harm or danger to a refugee’s life. Though we refer to physical protection when talking about personal security since insecurity “affects the whole person and the entire community of which he or she is a member,” in this discussion the terms "personal security" or "safety" are more accurately inclusive (UNHCR, "The personal security of refugees EC/1993/SCP/CRP.3", 1993). Though personal security refers to the security of the individual refugee and not national security, personal security of refugees has broader implications for international protection. In other words, if human rights of refugees are not protected, which includes liberty and security of

person, and then other rights and benefits from instruments put in place to protect those rights cannot be protected (UNHCR, "The personal security of refugees EC/1993/SCP/CRP.3", 1993).

The link between those seeking refuge, national and international security and the concerns that come with it are not new. In the 1960s and 1970s, African governments, in particular attached importance to security concerns as the refugee movement grew. Aware of the potential for conflict to spill over border, the international community has always emphasized, "that asylum must be recognized as a neutral, non-political act embedded in a system of multilateralism" ("Addressing refugee security", 2006). Additionally, the 1951 Refugee Convention was put in place to deal with states' security concerns through a system of checks and balances. However, due to the increasing complexity of integrating differing security interests with the strategies of international refugee regime, challenges have arisen that directly affect the rights of refugees. Thus, the personal security or physical protection of refugees becomes inextricably linked to national security and ultimately international security and/or protection ("Addressing refugee security", 2006).

As security of all types comes into question, violence as byproduct increases. While threats to physical security emanate from a variety of sources and in turn produce a variety of types of violence, sexual and gender-based violence particularly increases. For the purposes of my research sexual and gender based violence is violence that disproportionately affects one gender. This is inclusive of domestic violence, sexual assault and harassment, female genital mutilation (FGM) and opposition or armed violence within camps. Women and girls are mostly affected and victimized when it comes to these forms of SGBV, with the exception or armed opposition violence.

There are multiple conventions and policies put in place to safeguard and protect refugees, it is essential to recognize that refugees are marginalized populations who, in reality, are not always protected. This marginalization usually has to do with the reality of refugee camps and national policies put in place by the host country. Through my research, I hope to draw more attention to refugee issues and rights. In particular, my research aims to explain how all-fundamental rights of refugees must be protected and that current strategies employed to tackle issues that impede those rights are not effective solutions.

## **Methodology**

I am going to engage in this study through qualitative research. While ideally I would like to employ narrative research, ethnography or participatory action research, due to financial and time restrictions I cannot. Therefore, I am approaching the topic through case study research and phenomenological research. Phenomenological research may prove to be difficult due to the lack of access to primary sources. Nonetheless, I want to incorporate the experiences of refugees, through other sources such as news reports and secondary sources. As aforementioned, I will focus on a specific context in order to narrow my research, I will attempt to make my findings and conclusions cross-cutting by focusing on the phenomenon that tie together refugees globally.

For the purposes of this research, case study research is “both a methodology or a research strategy and a product of inquiry, that is a choice of what is to be studied.” (Cooper & Finley, 2014, 92) Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, 23). The flexibility of case study research allows for the inclusion

of both qualitative and quantitative research as well as thoroughly investigates a whole range of factors that influence the issue. “It is able to cope with the multiplicity of factors relating to the distinctive phenomenon.” (Cooper & Finley, 2014, 94) The use of case study when exploring security and violence in refugee camps allows for exploration of several variables while narrowing the exploration to specific contexts. Yet it simultaneously emphasizes themes that have broader implications and social, moral, economic, political and cultural ties. Specifically, I will be involved in descriptive and exploratory case studies. Employing description, I believe will make it easier to interpret and challenge existing assumptions. Incorporating methods from the exploratory case study category, on the other hand, will allow me to identify and address gaps in the field’s knowledge (Muvingi & Duckworth, 2014).

While case study research best fits this study, reservations that come with engaging in such research include finding data from a variety of sources that are current, boundedness and providing a concise report that is credible and trustworthy. Still, “case study research would enable the effective exploration of the relationships between structures, agents, processes, and outcomes” and has the ability “to present differing perspectives” (Muvingi & Duckworth, 2014, 98; 109). These elements of case study research allow me to not only possibly add to knowledge creation but also to “practice research as intervention” (Muvingi & Duckworth, 2014, 109).

As a researcher engaging in the study of such a complex topic, multiple concerns arise. Some of these concerns stem from me being the researcher. While there are many logistical, technical, and relational concerns that come about when conducting a qualitative study, aside from choosing a topic, dealing with the effects brought up by the topic needs to be addressed. The emphasis thus shifts to managing humanity and emotions during the process of producing

knowledge. Balancing between keeping your humanity while not allowing it to overcome you, so that you can productively continue your research has proven to be a challenge.

However, since this is a long-term study, I hope to find a better coping mechanism than experiencing the extreme of being either emotionally distraught or completely being detached from the human aspect of my research. This leads me to another concern, which is that of the subjects I am studying. Incorporating participant voices is one aspect of this study I have thought a lot about, considering the lack of accessibility I have to them. I intend for this study to be one that includes their voices and in fact lets those voice dictate what should be advocated for. However, currently I am doing so through the use of secondary sources and hope to, in the long-term, find other ways to incorporate those voices (Cooper & Finley, 2014).

## **Background**

The United Republic of Tanzania in the past forty years has hosted one of the largest populations of refugees in Africa and as of October 2015, 174, 283 refugees have been hosted in in two camps in the Kigoma region known as Nyarugusu and Nduta Refugee Camp (International Organization for Migration, 2015). The largest populations of refugees are the newly arrived refugees from Burundi, as a result of the influx that began in May 2015 and is ongoing. Since gaining independence in 1962, Burundi has seen on and off again armed violence for more than forty years. While much of violence has recently subsided, there are major barriers to stability and sustainable peace that remain. In April 2015, protest began over the president's decision to run for a contested third term. Between April 2015 and April 2016, there has been a fatality count of 1,155, of which at least 690 were civilians. While political crisis has been used

to describe events in Burundi, many reports have deemed “President Pierre Nkurunziza’s actions as ‘trigger for civil war’” (Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset, May 2016). The dynamics of the conflict have remained largely consistent, with the majority of violence being against civilians since July 2015, even though riots and protests made up early stages of the conflict. As such, reportedly more than 260,000 people have fled from Burundi with thousands others disappearing without a trace (Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset, May 2016). In addition to the large of Burundian refugees, Tanzanian refugee camps have seen an influx of Congolese as well due to the on and off violence that has occurred in the Democratic Republic of Congo since the Rwandan genocide.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the world’s sixth largest refugee population with almost half a million refugees having fled DRC since January 2014. Continuous instability fueled with armed conflict and ethnic tensions make it difficult and life threatening for many current refugees to return to DRC. The Congolese refugee population consists mainly of those who have fled from the first and second Congo wars in 1996-1997 and 1998-2003, respectively. More recently outbreaks of violence in eastern DRC stemming from the “absence of functioning state authorities, the fragility of state institutions, tensions over land ownership and citizenship, and externalisation of instability in neighbouring countries” have led to refugees fleeing to neighboring countries in the Great Lakes Region of Africa (Westerby & Ngo-Diep, 2013). These countries include Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia and Malawi. Since voluntary repatriation, as I mentioned, often is not an option, refugees are only left with the option of integration.

While many countries hosting refugees, including Tanzania, are signatories to the 1951

Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention, several impose restrictions on refugees to enjoy their rights. This is due to local insecurity in the host country, the misconception about refugees, the lack of financial or political capability, instability in the host country, and etc. Thus, refugees often end up living in refugee camps for years lacking in the most basic human rights and prone to face more violence. As will be demonstrated this is the case for Tanzania as well. The influx from majorly the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and other neighboring countries have created an overflowing refugee population that have few options as a result of restrictions and reservations in international conventions.

### **Literature Review: Security and Gender-Based Violence**

Through the review of literature of security in relation to violence in refugee camps, several themes have emerged. This includes over crowdedness, understaffing and lack of training of staff in camps, the focus on assistance, prevention in response to GBV, the facilitation of violence due to layouts of camps, lack of and alternatives to security and the voice of the international community versus the voices of the refugee population. Through this concern for safeguarding the rights of refugees, campaigns regarding refugee freedom of movement have grown (Chiasson, 2015). Specifically, the question of what does security and protection look like without impeding on the right for refugees to move around freely without restriction arises.

#### *Overcrowding*

The overcrowding of refugee camps has caused increased problems in terms of health, space, food, staffing and etc. Therefore, indirectly and directly contributing to increases in gendered violence in refugee camps. In the case of the camp in Nyarugusu, as of last September,

it had reached three times its capacity with more than 150,000 people. With Nyarugusu already one of the largest refugee camps in the world, the influx of refugees has, apart from increasing chances of sexual attacks and further rationed resources, exhausted surrounding areas and put more of a strain on the camp's population and environment (Tapper, 2016). This strain also endangers the physical safety of the camp's population and perpetuates the constant cycle of violence by leaving many to find alternative food and fuel sources themselves. While efforts have been made to ease overcrowding and find alternative fuel sources in Tanzania, along with camps in Zambia, Ethiopia and etc., the outset of political violence has caused Burundians and the Congolese to continue seeking refuge in Tanzania. The opening of camps in Nduta and Mendeli has helped to transfer many refugees, however, the refugee population at Nyarugusu still remains at more than 137, 000 people (Tapper, 2016).

As refugees, in Nyarugusu have continued to arrive in large numbers, strains have not been put only on supplies and staff but on the already challenging life of a refugee as well. Overcrowding in camps not only exposes women and children to gendered violence but it also endangers their physical safety through the exposing of diseases. As noted in 2015 by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, malaria and diarrhea have been spreading through Nyarugusu and outbreaks of cholera have instilled fear in agencies like Oxfam, Save the Age, and Help Children International. These diseases are abetted by weather changes like the rainy season and powerful storms, such as El Nino, when wet floors, cramped conditions, flooding, and crumbling shelters become breeding grounds for respiratory infection and waterborne diseases (Migiro, 2015). Overcrowding inadvertently, like physical health, impacts social and psychological health by leaving many stuck in cramped shelters for more than a temporary basis. Overcrowded living

situations and camps for refugees have proven to cause damage and have effects that are not only long-term, but far-reaching as well.

Overcrowding though widely exhibited in camps like Nyarugusu and Nduta in Tanzania due to the sheer number of refugees living in the camps, is also a global refugee problem. As assessed, in 2016, by the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) in a camp in Stockholm, Sweden, there is often a lack of privacy in camps due to overcrowding. There is lack of private space for families or women and girls to change. Additionally, they noted that centers also did not have showers and toilets that were separated by sex nor did the doors lock so safety of women and girls was often not ensured. One female asylum-seeker described sleeping in a large hall with no separation or dividers, but only pieces of cardboard separating beds. Unlike in Tanzania, families in these accommodation centers are at the very least placed together. However, single women, unaccompanied girls, and/or women with their children are often placed with men they do not know. This overcrowding and lack of privacy increases instances of sexual violence and discrimination. From November 2015 to January 2016, thirty-seven sex crimes were reported to Swedish police from within asylum accommodation centers. Many of these centers and camps are not meant to be long-term solutions and as such are not built for lengthy stays. Despite this refugees and asylum-seekers inhabit these places as home for years on end. With little to do but for people to wait, yet again, women are put into dangerous situations, including increased instances of domestic violence (Hersh & Obser, 2016). The outcomes of SGBV also increase health needs for already vulnerable populations. In Sweden, as well as other camps and accommodation centers around the world this yet again adds to the everyday problems refugees and asylum seekers face as well as the ineffectiveness and inadequacy of field staff.

*Insufficient rations and fuel sources*

Physical security of refugees is, as mentioned, threatened by the insecurity introduced by insufficient supplies of food, water and etc. because of ration cuts or other restrictions, such as increased refugee populations (“Addressing refugee security,” 2006). The overcrowding combined with the consequences of overcrowding causes and adds to food insecurity. This insecurity of basic needs has forced women to travel outside of refugee camps, endangering their freedom and physical safety, in search of materials such as firewood. In reports from Sierra Leone, women reported that the food assistance that they received from the United Nations Higher Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is too little and does not include fuel. Since it is the responsibility of women to prepare meals, they are obligated to go to the forest and collect firewood. Though they are aware of the danger, they often go anyway so that they can feed themselves and their families and/or because if they fail to do so they could be subjected to beatings from their husbands (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002). Similar risks of physical harm were imposed on women in refugee camps in Zambia, Ethiopia and Tanzania. In Tanzania’s Nyarugusu camp, in particular, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) reports that on average two to three women report being raped per week, in incidents related to collecting firewood, up until 15 kilometers outside of the camps. However, this is only the number of cases that have been reported and more so those reported in relation to collecting firewood. Staff workers estimate the cases that are unreported to be much higher, especially considering the increasing amount of refugees entering camps (Tapper, 2016).

In an article reporting about voices from the field, provided by Doctors Without Borders (MSF), in 2017, four patients in Tanzanian camps, particularly Nyarugusu and Nduta, described

the food, shelter and water challenges they face daily. A 22-year-old woman, Mpawenayo, who is 28 weeks pregnant, stated,

“When I arrived in Nduta I was given a tent, some food, some cooking utensils, and some water... And despite the assistance we receive, surviving in the camp is difficult: we don't have enough food and we're always hungry” (Medecins Sans Frontieres-Doctors Without Border, 2017).

Due to this traditional role that women are often put in, they not only expose themselves to rape and mutilation, but also miss out when it comes to the distribution of food and employment opportunities. Women are exposed to violence when trying to gather food and fuel sources as well as home if they do not succeed in providing for the family, as many men expect them. This cycle is perpetuated when male refugees are given preference and control of service in food distribution over families headed by women. Additionally, refugee men also receive the majority of income bearing positions due to this hierarchical structure that exists inside and outside of camps (Harris, 2000). Women and girls are forced into prostitution, sexual slavery, forced domestic labor and other abusive relationships as a way of supporting their families. As a result of the lack of employment opportunities within camps, a lack of ability to freely move outside of camps, and distributional inadequacies when it comes to food, women and girls are faced with insecurity and voluntarily become a part of it as well. Unless other viable work opportunities for refugee women become available within camps and the sex work and SGBV violence is dealt with properly after the fact, the cycle continues to perpetuate (Harris, 2000, 2).

Despite the efforts and advocacy for alternative fuel sources and fuel-efficient stoves, other concerns that remain in terms of personal security are understaffing, lack of proper training for staff and underreporting of SGBV. In many refugee rich areas, like Eritrea and Zambia, the lack of staff in office and sub-offices were assessed and the link between insufficient amounts of staff to the lack of resolutions with protection problems became apparent. This lack in staff capacity also meant “insufficient capacity to gather information about problems and abuses, inadequate promotion of refugee (especially female) capacity building, and the elimination of counseling for survivors of trauma and sexual and gender-based violence” (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002, 24). In addition, to the lack of staff, the particular lack of female staff in areas, such as Turkey, increased the unlikeliness to report SGBV. This was primarily due to lack of education around it, the inability to report certain issues to male staffers, and the stigma attached to incidences of rape and etc. in many cultures (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002).

### *Inadequate and Under Staffing*

This lack, especially women staffers and staff trained in gender sensitivity directly impacts women refugees’ lack of security, of education and action and in reporting incidents of violence, as mentioned. While UNHCR has made many policies and progress to protect refugee women, its inability to make training on gender mandatory impedes this progress (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002). Additionally, the lack of training and gender sensitivity makes girls’ education as well issues as how to address/respond to issues of SGBV unclear and a non-entity. The inability, especially to educate women and girl refugees, can unknowingly let violence keep occurring because women remain uninformed of their rights

and the value of their voice. For example, in the context of many of these cultures there is a stigma attached to sexual violence and so while it may occur, many may not report it due to fear of shame. Similarly, we see the acceptance of domestic violence by families in refugee camps in Jordan. In fact, a study conducted in Jordan regarding domestic violence showed that more than 60% of men and women considered violence against wives to be okay in response to certain behaviors (Khawaja, 2004).

The implementation of educational programs in camps would help deter from cultural practices that perpetuate violence. However, due to the lack of staffing, proper training for the staff, and lack of adequate mechanisms for obtaining such information field staff finds it difficult to address problems of SGBV and tend not to seek information. Despite these obstacles many women in camps viewed education, in terms of academia, as a top priority. While access to education/schooling and attendance to school/classes has improved, in some areas access to facilities, teachers and recurring societal and familial norms prevent girls, women and children from fully taking advantage of what is offered (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002, 29). Due to these various reasons another basic human right is denied to refugees, particularly refugee girls.

This minimal access to women staff, education and other basic needs was evident in addressing instances of SGBV that are reported as well when refugees seek health care. Like field staff, in cases like Eritrea, Tanzania and Zambia, there are few or no health workers and women expressed reluctance in seeking help from male doctors. Overcrowding becomes partly responsible for this inadequacy in addition to already existing problems. Physical security of refugees is again threatened by letting major health risks such as malaria, cholera, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health problems and etc. go untreated. Even though reports have shown that health

care delivery has improved, health budgets as well as access to female personnel and medicine and supplies is severely lacking. As can be seen in Afghan camps in Pakistan, “budget constraints have led to some consolidation of health facilities, which reportedly diminishes access”(Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002, 30). Many of these constant obstacles deters refugees from seeking medical help, especially women and girls who have certain time constraints due to their responsibilities. Along with the obvious conclusion that women and girls are, especially in comparison to men, deprived of their fundamental rights, *Jennifer Harris and the Guideline on Refugee Women* “noted that inequality of opportunities exist between men and women within refugee camps” (Harris, 2000,31). As a result the human rights principle of non-discrimination also gets called into question.

Security is yet another area, usually, addressed by field staff rather than trained personnel or law enforcement. However, due to lack of training and a lack in numbers of field staff, the issue of security and protection gets addressed through other means such as assistance ("United Republic of Tanzania: UNHCR Global Report", 2009). While assistance efforts are being provided, by agencies like UNHCR, what they are providing are not enough. Additionally, guidelines implemented to improve issues that have occurred through assessment, are often not implemented or have produced little to no progress. Moreover, UNHCR’s operational partners in the field, who help to provide assistance, like field staff “have inadequate expertise in gender sensitive programming and in understanding how to promote the protection of refugee women and girls” (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002, 34). This is inclusive of certain host governments who despite having the power to implement programs that will safeguard women’s security have not done so. In fact many national policies, legislation and the justice system have supported gender discrimination and SGBV through lack of accountability.

The military or local police enforcement that are put in place for refugee protection are either not enough or directly responsible for rape, harassment and/or sexual exploitation of refugee women. However, like other perpetrators of SGBV, they are rarely charged with crimes or held accountable. This is a direct result of impunity within local justice systems and/or refugees' hesitancy to report offenses committed by the people who are supposed to protect them (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002).

Despite security forces, law enforcement and/or military that perpetrate SGBV against refugees, it has been shown that security mechanisms that involve refugee guards, wardens, patrols and etc. can be highly effective with proper training and supervision. "It has been shown in both Guinea and Tanzania that when security forces are trained to understand refugee law and issues related to sexual and gender-based violence they are better able to provide camp security" ("Addressing refugee security," 2006, 79). Successful outcomes in this case are only possible if roles are clearly defined and there is coordination between district and regional law enforcement, field safety advisors (FSAs), field staff, military and refugee patrols, guards, and wardens. Codes of conduct need to be used as guides to determine appropriate behavior for police and contribute to greater accountability within the force. Along with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, good relations, especially with local law enforcement authorities become key in enhancing the effectiveness of responses to security threats in refugee situations ("Addressing refugee security," 2006).

While assessments have been made for UNHCR to partner with organizations that have been exposed to gender sensitive training, methods of prevention have also been recommended to combat problems of personal security. In lieu of material and human resources to provide security, UNHCR and other human rights advocates, in the past decade, have tried to change

how they handle cases on SGBV. They have done so by enhancing willingness to support survivors, recognizing the need for staff to be trained to take strong positions about SGBV and trying to work with men to find respectful solutions and decrease tensions (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002, 16). In addition, to incorporating men, participation of women is also being encouraged and as such programs like "women's initiatives" have been launched and aimed at capacity building, education, psychological and social support and income generation. However, like other assistance and programs instituted, though women's initiatives could play useful roles in the protection of women, they are not necessarily successful and have achieved little to no progress incorporating women's voices in decision-making. This lack of participation is often due to resistance from men to involve women in leadership roles and incorporate their participation. Yet other times it is due to oversight on the part of agencies in decision-making processes that can help improve living conditions and increase security ("United Republic of Tanzania: UNHCR Global Report", 2009).

### *Physical Layouts of Camps*

This oversight can be seen from the report assessing Pakistan's refugee camps, when it came to physical layouts of camps, refugee women noted that UNHCR and other NGOs implementing baths, latrines and/or showers did not consult them. As a result, Afghan women did not use the baths placed on the perimeter of the camp for fear of being attacked. After surveys and reporting of this concern, the NGOs did change its plan and built baths closer to the refugees, especially since physical layout of camps seems to be a reoccurring problem in many camps. Nonetheless, due to lack of incorporation of a human centered design and refugee input in refugee camps, unnecessary strain is placed on refugees. Even if these designs are later

corrected, like in the case of Pakistan, it is often done so at the cost of time, resources, and more difficulties faced by the population within the camp. In the case of the Afghan population, at the very least, the layout of the camp was corrected. In Macedonia, similarly, latrines and showers are built along the perimeters of the camp and out of fear of being attacked women could not use them in the early morning or evening (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 200, 26). Yet while these are the realities of many experiences of refugees, host governments and UN agencies tend to emphasize guidelines they have in place and the progress and shifts that have been made over the previous circumstances. While this progress may be true, refugee populations are left facing the same difficulties, rather than having the problem corrected. More than that, the experiences of the refugees and their feelings/thoughts about their safety are left unconsidered and what the international community believes their experiences to be or the solutions they have instituted is given to be the account of refugee life.

UNHCR along with access and its presence was established to ensure the safety of refugees and provide humanitarian assistance and support so that refugee life meets agreed upon international standards. As such, staff and other UNHCR personnel are the one who most closely experience and are aware of issues that can and do arise in refugee camps. Thus, it is not news to UNHCR or the international community that improvements need and should be made to ensure the security of refugees. In a report published by UNHCR regarding the various proposals made about "practical measures which have been, and can be, implemented at the camp level to improve the security of refugees," it was recognized that improvements needed to happen in regards to camp location, design and administration (UNHCR, "The personal security of refugees EC/1993/SCP/CRP.3", 1993). While certain programs have been implemented to have beneficial impacts on refugee safety, most of these steps still lack follow through and the voices

of those who are directly impacted by these “improvements.” However, it is still necessary to recognize that measures, despite their ineffectiveness, were implemented in recognition of how physical layouts of camps can negatively impact refugee, particularly women and children’s lives. UNHCR has approached layout and design in different ways in different regions of the world including by providing refugee section leaders with police whistles in case of attack. They have also tried to locate camps in safer or more defensible sites for refugee camps, preferably before expenses incurred to build camps, provide special psychological and social attention in cases where enclosed camps cannot be avoided, and organize special accommodation and programming for refugees who may be vulnerable to attack in certain situations (UNHCR, “The personal security of refugees EC/1993/SCP/CRP.3”, 1993). Nonetheless, underscoring these initiatives also emphasizes the lack of incorporation and forethought about the daily lives that refugees, especially women, girls and children live. As mentioned while education to tackle security and other issues is viewed as a top priority by refugees and staff, many of proposals implemented, such as programmes, are not feasible for women and girls to attend or participate in.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

Tanzania, one of the world’s major refugee receiving states, is just one case of how widespread and complex refugee issues are. Though governments, UNHCR, NGOs and the international community recognize many of the issues and challenges faced by refugees and have put in place initiatives to correct them, but they have done so at a great cost. It comes at the cost of time, money, resources, and the dignity and basic right of refugees, Moreover, many of these

“solutions” addressing security and SBGV issues prove to be ineffective and bring into question what and who are national governments and the United Nations trying to protect. Contradictory statements and policies further abet these questions.

In Tanzania, refugee policy around freedom of movement of rights is restricted to ensure “protection” of refugees and asylum seekers. In 1998, Tanzania enacted the Refugees Act, which has the power to require asylum seekers and refugees to remain within a designated area (DA). Designated areas are often euphemisms for refugee camps and settlements. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees’ requirement for refugees to reside in refugee camps and settlements bolsters national policies’ direction of movement restriction (Chiasson, 2015). However, international law also holds States Party to the 1951 Refugee Convention accountable for refugees. While following Tanzania’s independence, in 1961, Tanzania had an open door policy, as argued by scholars, the objective of adoption of newer laws, like the 1998 Refugees Act was to move away from this notion. Additionally, while the newer laws were meant to conform to the country’s continental obligation to the 1969 OAU Convention, it is clear that the policies were intended to signal withdrawal from former President Julius Nyerere’s Pan Africanist policies and make Tanzania look like a less appealing option for asylum seekers (Chiasson, 2015). This objective became more apparent over time as repatriation became the preferred solution and new legislation enforced limits on refugee rights.

More recently, through Tanzania’s 2003 National Refugee Policy, the enforcement of restrictions on refugee movement has intensified with the possibility of detention and fines for refugees who leave camps without permission (Chiasson, 2015). While these restrictions are often cited as measures used to protect refugees, they are actually used to deter new asylum seekers and refugees. In turn making especially vulnerable populations, like women and girls,

even more vulnerable (Hersh & Obser, 2016). As mentioned, freedom of movement is a basic human right and a fundamental right promised to refugees and more than that it is critical to their everyday lives and their ability to enjoy other human rights (Chiasson, 2015). This includes rights to employment, education and naturalisation. Along with rights it impedes their ability to maintain their human dignity. In essence, refugees who are not allowed freedom of movement end up being locked up members of society (Chiasson, 2015). Often personal security, due to these policies, ends up endangered in more ways than one. For example because refugees are limited to the confines of the camp there chances for economic independence and self-reliance are severely impeded, guaranteeing little to no hope of returning to their once secure lives. Moreover, these policies ultimately put in place to benefit host countries can be harmful for the state as well. In Tanzania, since refugees are not allowed to travel more than four kilometers outside of the DA, the economic activity between refugees and local populations is brought to a standstill. Those who do leave camps and DAs without permits do so risking prison, detainment and/or deportation and lose the ability to have access to formal humanitarian assistance, and legal protection (Chiasson, 2015). Yet some do it anyway in hopes of gaining better livelihoods and/or as a result of specific security concerns that often arise from overcrowding, improper staffing, lack of food and supplies and the accommodations provided within the camps. Thus, refugees risk one part of their personal security in order to preserve or secure others; leaving them constantly physically unprotected.

While policies, like the ones enacted in Tanzania, are meant to “signal disengagement from the Open Door policy” and protect refugees, it does the opposite and makes them more susceptible to violence (Chiasson, 2015). As can be seen in refugee camps in Zambia, which also restrict movement, the removal of men, women and children “from their prior, culturally defined

networks of protection, support, and social discipline” can magnify patterns of abusive behavior (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children, 2002, 24). Sexual and gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence and female genital cutting, are results of these patterns.

The overcrowding, inadequate food and fuel supplies, understaffing and physical layouts of camps and vice versa abet these instances of violence. These as well as other tremendous strains of refugee life often exacerbate instances of violence. Violence also becomes an increasing possibility because the lack of movement prevents refugees from building sustainable and independent livelihoods, which in turn prevents refugees from fulfilling their basic needs (Chiasson, 2015). This can lead to increased alcohol abuse and as such domestic violence as well as increased need to travel outside the DA, increasing instances of rape (“Addressing refugee security,” 2006). These factors ultimately create a perpetual cycle of violence for refugees.

In Tanzania, several refugees, through media reports from Al Jazeera, have expressed fear for their lives “and that there is no adequate security in the camps to protect them” (IPP Media, 2016). This fear includes but is not limited to instance of sexual assault, harassment, domestic violence, FGM and etc. Many refugees fleeing from Burundi have accused their government of sending in armed men to hunt down opposition supporters. Meanwhile, the government of Tanzania maintains that overall the camps remain calm and “they are increasing efforts to ascertain the truth of the situation, but that they have no evidence of refugees being hunted down or being recruited” (IPP Media, 2016). The Home Affairs Ministry spokesman, Isaac Nantanga has even said that the security around the country in refugee camps has been improved. He states, “ We have police on the ground who perform regular patrols and security operations at the camps...they also work inclusively with the refugees and help them form community police among their own people” (IPP Media, 2016). Further, the Tanzanian

government has cited the Refugees Act of 1998 and its 2003 policy as an encampment policy that is being more enforced, even more so now due to the influx of refugees. While they make no attempts to hide exactly what the policy is, they state “security can be better guaranteed if they [refugees] adhere to the rules governing refugee camps” (IPP Media, 2016). Statements like these, made by national governments, provide a different narrative than ones that the refugees themselves provide. Yet again, policies that are cited to ensure the protection of refugees, ends up perpetuating the danger they face. The framing of current guidelines and policies, in cases like Tanzania’s, as effective mask the true problems, hardships and experiences that refugees are facing. Overall, it hides the human rights that are being denied to “ensure” other rights and as a result hides the international legal statutes and conventions that the government is violating (Chiasson, 2015). Thus, while international standards exist and, as witnessed, are cited as being used, even they fail to provide true security and protection to refugees. As such, inadequacy, hardship and mistreatment have become the reality of being a refugee.

Reducing security threats and ensuring refugee security has a lot to do with host countries and the international community understanding the ways in which assistance and refugee policies are approached and connect. Some argue that addressing the root causes of violence, crime, military or subversive activities and how refugees are not only affected by it but involved in it is more important than many of the other steps being taken to prevent security threats. This includes more efforts being directed towards good camp management and physical protection of refugees. “This necessitates increasingly comprehensive approaches to security measures, and strategies for a broad range of refugee situations which engage key actors at every stage of the humanitarian effort” (“Addressing refugee security, 2006, 82). Ensuring the camps are highly coordinated and managed properly by actors at every level will prevent miscommunication and

will decrease the likelihood of overcrowding, lack of food and supplies, improper staffing and poorly designed accommodations from occurring and in turn causing violence, sanitation, health, and other security issues from taking place.

Improving coordination and camp management is easier said than done. Mistrust is bound to breed when scarce resources are at play and as such the first step to improving conditions in camps and in effective refugee protection is addressing the relationship between host countries and refugees. Ideally, that would include integrating the needs and rights of both populations as much as possible. Minimizing disparities in standards of living and infrastructure between local and refugee populations as well as clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions would be the way to go about such an integration (“Addressing refugee security,” 2006). That is only a possibility if stereotypes do not exist at the national level and there is a genuine willingness by states to accept refugees into the country. In other words, there should be recognition that personal security of refugees does not have to contradict national security. Having said that it becomes necessary to mention that security cannot always be integrated into one response because, as is obvious, it has interdependent dimensions. While all refugee strategies and policies underline that host states must fulfill its obligation to protect refugees within its borders, if they are unwilling or unable to do so, it is United Nations’ practice to have an option of some type of international response. While this may bring us back to UNHCR and its mandate or refugee law, it also emphasizes the need to address the basic principles that these practices layout in a different manner (“Addressing refugee security,” 2006).

There are many different interests of the various different actors involved in refugee security. Therefore, while obligations and definitions have been laid out by conventions that precede many of today’s problems, it becomes necessary to define obligation and responsibilities

to formalize the roles of all actors involved. This aids in outlining the international community's extent for supporting a host country as well as a host country's responsibility for promoting the best interests of the refugee population. Interests often conflict when it comes to a state's need versus a refugee's needs versus what is laid out by and in international bodies ("Addressing refugee security,"2006). This often stems from the housing of refugees in countries who may be experiencing conflict themselves or instability. This ultimately increases discrimination against refugees and causes many of the restrictive national policies. However, that not need be always the case, especially if host countries come to the realization that the burden does not always have to fall on them, especially financially ("Addressing refugee security," 2006).

## **Conclusion**

While this is a long-term study and there is more literature that needs to be incorporated to round out my research, current literature and analysis demonstrates the emergence of multiple bigger picture themes. What has come to light is that while the focus of this paper is personal security of refugees, means to discuss safeguarding the right of refugees to protection cannot be talked about without talking about all fundamental human rights of refugees. Additionally, while steps are being taken to combat factors that contribute to SGBV, such as overcrowding, under and inadequate staffing and the physical layouts of camps, most programs and attempts that have been instituted are highly ineffective, unsuccessful and non inclusive. In fact, there is little awareness of this lack of inclusion, especially women and girls' inclusion, simply because national and international law believe proper assistance and policies have been into put place to ensure the personal safety of refugees. This causes many of the programs to be highly unsuccessful and worsens already existing problems.

Despite these realizations, there are still many other questions and concepts I intend to explore before I come to any ultimate analyses or conclusions. This includes further researching urban planning and whether there are more human centered design approaches to refugee camps being considered. I also intend to examine further aspects regarding infiltration of camps by government militia as well as the use of weapons and other forms of protection refugees feel the need to bring into refugee camps. While I intended to explore these two concepts in my current research, time restraints and a lack of credible sources made the task more difficult than anticipated. Yet again, reflecting the fear of refugees to participate and let their voice be heard. More recently, UNHCR has also been exploring alternative shelters, which could potentially return the dignity and physical and mental stability many refugees have lost by living in such confined space. In examining this phenomenon of SGBV, the expectation is to bring about change in the way security, protection and violence is handled in refugee camps. Nevertheless, as I mentioned, a limitation of this study is that it is ongoing and as such any analysis is preliminary and concrete conclusions are unable to be made at this time. However, that is not to discredit the claims I have made but rather to recognize differing perspectives and research.

Having said that it is obvious through my research shows that camp management and preparedness needs to be better instituted to prevent overcrowding and in cases where overcrowding is inevitable it becomes vital that camps' infrastructure remain intact. In this case, the burden should not always fall on the host country, especially when it comes to funding. It also means that governments should not work against international standards, but rather put aside stereotypes and realize the refugee population and their needs do not have to conflict with the needs and interests of the State. If overcrowding is addressed, a trickle down effect will occur, in that many of the other factors though may not disappear will be significantly less of a challenge.

Ultimately, overcrowding affects food and fuel supplies, health, sanitation, staffing (in all aspects), layouts of camps and ultimately security on several levels. This can also be said for the other factors and as such it becomes necessary for the international community not to just deal with the SGBV cases after the fact, but to address root causes that cause and/or exacerbate violence and create preventive strategies. Simultaneously, the care and attention provided after SGBV cases are reported, especially when it comes to health care, has to be better assessed and readdressed. Bringing us back again to proper and effective camp management, only with which can staffing, education and security be addressed at all levels.

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