# From Forced Migration to No Ethnic Vacancy in Refugee Camps: Cross-Border Tears of Ethnic Minority in Africa

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**Abstract:** This paper began with the assumption that meaningful protection of refugees is critical input to international peace and security. However, this input is usually agitated by the complex relations between the practices in refugee protection, and the approaches of resolving entrenched ethnic tensions amongst them. The theory of change for refugee protection is that, while the mandate is humanitarian as it has been for over seventy years now, it is fundamentally a component of peacebuilding in countries producing refugees. Important point here is that refugees are cross-border nationalists who should adequately be prepared to meaningfully contribute to the international peace process. However, this process which should deliver simultaneous purpose of protecting refugees in host States, and contribute to political solutions in countries of origins through reconciled ethnic differences in their camps is still work in progress. The article will justify the argument with some case studies in which ethnicity destabilizes protection aims and undermines its position in international peacebuilding processes.

**Keywords:** Protection of Refugees, Ethnicity, Ethnic Conflicts, Protection for Peacebuilding

## Introduction

The article explores the relationship between refugee protection and durable solutions and how ethnic conflict in Africa's refugee camps threatens this relationship. Drawing on examples from some selected case studies, it has been demonstrated that ethnic conflicts amongst refugees undermines the need for inclusive durable solutions in various conflict situations. The linking aspect of refugee protection to achieve sustainable solutions can be elusive if endemic and systemic inability of the minority ethnic refugees to realize protection in a meaningful way persists. This can occur even after living in protracted setting for several years. As such, it has been argued that durable solutions should be designed in a framework that is peopled. Thus, it should be based on the linkages that promote a feeling of oneness among different ethnic refugee groups.

When gaps are not addressed within the intricate connections of historical, political, social and economic aspects of countries of origin, this inadequacy is resuscitated through ethnic divisions in camps. Therefore, full and equal protection of refugee rights that produce benefits of refugee-hood by all, is what UNHCR work entails. It is one of many means of achieving effective regime of asylum that benefit not only the refugees but also the overall post-conflict reconstruction processes in countries of origin. The implementation of a dualistically purposed process is often struck apart when refugee protection becomes a subject of various pre-conceptions of its meaning. In some circles, refugee protection is purely considered as humanitarian gesture which had nothing to do with political efforts in countries producing refugees. This soft approach is what occasionally encroaches into refugee protection practices with negative consequences.

The insertion of UNHCR interlink into peacebuilding paradigm is eclipsed by these pre-conceptions, leaving service providers with ad hoc measures such as re-territorization and re-ethnicization of refugee camps. Since these responses are designed as a dimension of a humanitarian activity, their operational connectivity with political efforts to resolve the larger conflict is undermined. In other words, they are applied in the absence of a robust conflict management structure within UNHCR mandate. This is because UNHCR work is guided and enveloped in the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, mandating it to support cross-border conflict victims with a humanitarian lens. However, as this article will demonstrate, UNHCR's grip on its traditional mandate is gradually re-evolving in light of new trends of refugee crises. The current projections indicate that UNHCR work is becoming more vivid in the global peacebuilding community than purely humanitarian. This expanded scope of work has been necessitated by continued experiences of violent clashes in the camps. Using some selected case studies on ethnic violence, this article argues that UNHCR's lineage with peacebuilding is becoming more necessary. Therefore, peacebuilding among refugees should move from the edge of UNHCR traditional mandate to the centre of its organizational structure.

To this effect, the paper briefly reviews the main approaches to international protection in the past seventy years or so. Then, it proceeds to give a definitional clarification of ethnicity and how it threatens the relevance of refugee protection. This is followed by detailed exploration of ethnic conflicts in refugee camps,

giving selected case studies as examples. In order to cast better understanding of such conflicts, the debate has been supported with conflict theories. This is to give a more realistic picture of how refugee protection and ethnicity interact from peacebuilding perspective. Thus, the theories are meant to appreciate ethnicity in peace discourse and how they can be used to tap peace particles from the refugees themselves. It has been demonstrated that, the broader field of peacebuilding should be further fine-tuned with refugee protection. The better netting of its contributions to overall peacebuilding efforts in countries of origin should be evaluated from camp practices.

## Overview of International Protection

The common understanding is that national governments have the role of guaranteeing and protecting the basic human rights and security of its citizens. But when a State is unwilling because of being a perpetrator of armed conflict or unable to provide this basic protection, due to lack of resources and other unbearable circumstances, people may flee to seek safety in other countries as refugees. These situations can be addressed with short to long-term solutions, combined in systematic and effective process to avoid refugee crisis after refugee crisis. The envisioned sustainable safety of refugees is therefore in the concept of seeking durable solutions.

According to Bidandi (2018:2), this concept was initiated in 1945 after the Second World War (WW2) to address the global refugee encounters. Accounting from this history, we can deduce that the present refugee regime was established as a response to WWII humanitarian crises. In order to institutionalize the response, the creation of UNHCR and the adoption of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention were done. In this regard, UNHCR's principal mandate relates to upholding the human rights of people who lack national protection. In addition to this, the asylum institution that acts an emblem of UNHCR establishment, was meant to support the process of seeking solutions for refugees and other people of concern to it. Overtime, the challenges facing UNHCR in protecting these basic principles have provided lessons for the future. For example, the refugee protection regime was not established to address the root causes of conflict that in themselves create refugees.

But UNHCR position in international process of finding solutions to root causes of conflicts has recently been maximized. It is a clear indication that the refugee agency is an integral player in the search for peace. Another case in point here, is that in many countries, particularly in the least developed, refugees are hosted in camps which ordinarily become their identifying mark. There is an assumption that hosting refugees in camps will offer some degree of security to refugees themselves, humanitarian workers and host communities. Also, it facilitates effective and convenient management of refugee movements and control. Whether in support of refugees or Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), UNHCR works with national governments, donors, NGOs, hosting and refugee communities etc, as partners to offer protection. Ordinarily, IDPs remain under the protection of their respective governments as situation may permit. The 1951 Refugee Convention therefore, defines a refugee as a person who is outside the country of his or her nationality and unable or unwilling to return to it, '*owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion*'.

In this regard, and as already indicated, the 1951 Convention and UNHCR establishment should be understood in the context of WWII displacements, and it applied only to persons in Europe who became refugees prior to 1951. In the decades that followed, the refugee crises rapidly spread throughout the world, and it swiftly became significant to have an international legal framework required to protect all refugees. Responding to this need, a 1967 Protocol to the Convention removed the temporal and geographic limitations of the 1951 Convention, extending its Provisions to all persons who fall within its definition. Of significant, UNHCR ensures that the international standards guaranteed in the 1951 Convention, its 1967 Protocol, and in various regional instruments are respected. They include the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration.

Among the fundamental refugee rights UNHCR tries to protect is the right not to be forcibly returned, or *refouled* to a territory where the refugee's life, liberty or physical security may be threatened. The Convention also calls on non-discrimination in the application of its provisions and guarantees a certain standard of treatment in relation to basic social services such as education, housing, and employment. The holistic application of these instruments is important because the concept of refugee-hood is conceived in relation to a rapture of the ties between an individual and the authorities of his or her own country. Thus, refugees can, in this case be conceived as a special category of stateless persons who have disengaged relations with their original countries. Conceptualizing protection in the circumstances of statelessness due to 'State failure' is therefore the key to understanding the situations surrounding their refugee-hood. Simply, refugee statelessness is about no protection accorded to a person by a State to which he or she is a citizen. It is different from traditional statelessness which comes with no legal attachment or citizenship to any State.

The additional important element in refugee protection, from peacebuilding perspective is about understanding the social embroidery of the displaced populations. For example, there are specific protection and assistance activities that should be provided to mitigate the effects of social stitches such as ethnic tensions amongst refugees. These may include specialized support accorded to minority groups facing threats from the host communities or more so from other ethnic groups within the camps. As will be demonstrated in the succeeding discussions, the article subscribes that ethnic differences among refugees are some of the biggest threats to social harmony and the desired protection benefits.

## Definitional Clarification of Ethnicity

In order to comprehend the linkage between refugee protection and ethnic conflict, it is important to have basic understanding of what ethnicity mean in practical terms. According to Davies (1996:80-81), ethnicity is the condition of belonging to an ethnic group. It can also mean the socio-psychological identity felt by members of an ethnic community. It is a term derived from the Greek ethnos meaning a group of people characterized by common descent and therefore a basic human category in itself as opposed to a sub-group of a larger unit. A primordialist viewpoint is that ethnicity refers to a group of people with 'memories of a shared past' (Schermerhorn 1970, Bulmer 1986). Here, the collective historical experiences are points of emphasis and is the oldest sociological and anthropological definition of ethnicity.

In other words, people feel a sense of belonging and kinship through a perceived shared history. Schermerhorn argues that each society in the modern world contains subsections or sub-systems more or less distinct from the rest of the population (1970: 12). In this case, ethnicity is something given, ascribed at birth, derived from the kin or clan structure of human society, hence something more or less fixed and permanent (Geertz 1963, Isaacs 1975, Stack1986). In some cases, this view can be understood in the context of 'ancient hatred' that inevitably results in creation of self-identities that are in conflicts with those of others. Its velocity for quick mobilization, regardless of the consequences, is one such prominent feature in it. In contrast, 'instrumentalist' theorists have asserted that identity was simply constructed and exploited as a means of mobilization. They also acknowledge the role of ethnicity in identity, perceptions and interpretation of events, which leads to stereotypes and prejudices and cause conflicts in several ways. In this sense, the constructivist approach to 'ethnicity' offers a good starting point to explain why the ethnicity of refugees is important (Ruegger 2019:45). It is useful as ethnic groups are defined as self-perceived communities with a shared culture and a common ancestry (Ruegger 2019:45).

Perhaps central to these definitions, is the subjectivity which sees ethnicity as an identity of a social-psychological reality. It is a concept with an inherent inference to both collective and individual aspects of the phenomenon. So, group and individual identities are stimulants to mobilization in the struggle for resources, equality and social justice. Ratcliffe (2014:3) argues that ethnicity is not a static entity, but one that exhibits a complex, multidimensional character through culture, historical experiences, memories, kinship and so on. As such, ethnic collectivities can be, and are made and remade over time. From the definitions given, ethnicity relates to a group of people with communal features such as customs, rituals and pre-conceptions that they use to institutionalize their community identity. They can crystalize descendants and ancestors' lineage, and promote cultural transmission from one generation to the next. In all definitions, there seems to have some degree of subjectivity attached to each of them and this is what strengthens ethnic boundaries.

In other numerous jurisdictions, ethnicity is used to fasten grounds for inclusion and exclusion. This problem is acute, especially in a multi-ethnic society where interaction and competition with one another is based on inclusion-exclusion split. This leads to distinctiveness of individual groups or a network of them. The end results are that the included members consolidate feelings of individual obligations to the group and vice versa. Notably, the person's commitment to the group is mainly reciprocated by group's solidarity with that individual. From all the arguments above, ethnicity depicts the centrality of 'belonging' to a particular ethnic group. The 'belonging' is amalgamated in common sentiments, experience, and history. Sometimes, these common characteristics are well-lit by blood, mind, and place connections. As such conflict develops in their variations from one group to the next. They are key to understanding ethnic tensions even when their origin might have been lost in the meanders of social trajectories.

Sometimes, they are born out of pre-conceptions about place of origin and mind set connections. In this sense, it matters less whether objectively or subjectively maximized, as long as they promote group interest. Culture as seen in the distinctive beliefs, values, institutions, rituals etc create a cluster of 'truths' which anchors the groups' existence. They tend to shape the 'we and them' feelings which characteristically, promote the 'We-ness and They-ness' in the ethnic group affiliations. Simply, it marks two sides of interaction due to the 'We-ness' while 'Othering' those outside the social boundaries. It is these dynamics that validate a group's attitude towards another regardless of the consequences it produces. They reinforce the split with minority groups

mostly receiving the inferior status from the larger groups that enjoy the dominance stature. This phenomenon permits struggle for possession of territory and language as means of maintaining group cohesion. The use of certain narrative in favor or against others becomes a common social construct. Based on the above, this article submits that ethnic identity provides an alternative social classification system that, in itself groups people according to place, time and context-specific.

## Theorizing Ethnic Conflicts in Refugee Camps

Although most refugees will not rush to trigger violence based on their ethnic affiliations, when incited, this identity becomes a strong motivator. It becomes severe when ethnic marginalization becomes the tool for building resilience of one group against another. Protracted refugee situations arising from wars lasting more than five years without prospects of immediate solution complicates ethnic relations and compounds the problems (Crisp 2003). In fact, when conflicts remain unresolved for a long time, the United Nations humanitarian relief assistance activities start reflecting as though they are long term objectives (Kaiser 2005:352). This is so because other areas of state building such as democracy alone, have no guarantee to stability (Zakaria 1997). Bearing in mind this fact, the United Nations continues to offer assistance to displaced populations as a dimension to the bigger strategy despite the challenges faced.

The problem can be grave in ethno-plural refugee camps that mark a big gap in the needed inclusive peacebuilding. In the sense that, ethnic conflicts are fueled by a combination of identity based factors compounded by economic and social injustice (Harris and Reilly 1998:9 in Jinadu 2007:7). Wisdom for peace, puts pluralistic identity on the edge of active selection and contestation (Demmers 2012:124). Therefore, the safety of identity for the minority refugees depends on how UNHCR mitigates the aspect of including and excluding behaviors. Ordinarily, the narrative of exclusion and inclusion is embedded in the structures of communication, power relations, and institutional practices (Jabri 1996:134 in Demmers 2012:124). In this respect, the type of message given to refugees, inter-ethnic power relations established or embraced in camps and institutionalized control measures of protection itself by agencies, determines the level to which ethnicity creates tensions among refugees.

It is extremely important to reciprocate protection with control of these factors since it can be demonstrated that some refugee camps have been breeding grounds for ethnic conflict. Sometimes, criminal networks that have committed serious atrocities have been grown in the camp (Clark 2014:235). Other times, refugee camps have been viewed as crime practicing sites, rendering them as non-places of solace. Unchecked tensions which are entangled as 'brought-in ethnic conflicts', gain momentum to explode to the detriment of camp social stability. These problems do not instantly blow into open conflict. One of the explanations being, refugees are generally viewed as ordinary people in extra-ordinary circumstances. This view placed on the heads of refugees, blurs out these illusive but crucial considerations to effective protection. They produce a gap in peace discourse that renders refugee camps as 'peace deficit areas' of international arrangement.

Of course, the 1951 Convention definition of a refugee still stifles the shaping of alternative perspectives on the refugee protection and conflict. To some measurable extent, its definitional application still pulls back UNHCR's efforts to actively position its formation to the international peacebuilding community. As such, UNHCR and host governments cannot easily demolish narratives that promote tensions in refugee camps without colliding with 1951 Convention principles. Meanwhile, Horowitz (1985) acknowledges the power of ethnic mobilization in permeating the fabric of society which can challenge the very existence of a State. Connor (1994) added that this could even lead to splinter groups fighting for their own identity. Lindstrom (1996) amplifies this by subscribing that ethnic groups have the ability to mobilize more easily and effectively than other collective players. By nature, ethnic conflicts are generally hard to resolve and might even become protracted (Kaufmann1996).

Davies (1996:89) added that when inequalities come from ethnic discrimination, ethnicity provides cohesive basis for mobilization. It is easier because of its subjective attachments through beliefs, language, rituals etc. Jinadu (2007:12) gives a reminder that ethnicity is a dynamic, manipulable and mobilizable political resources in conflict situations. According to Brubaker (2013:1) the unfortunate part of UNHCR work, is that it has three main contradictions; (a) the tensions between responsibility to protect and responsibility to ensure durable solutions, (b) the trade-off between bringing safety to people and bringing people to safety, and (c)the challenges of balancing practical compromise with adhering to general normative framework. The arguments above indicate that ethnic tensions are a very good and readily available resource for mobilization. Therefore, addressing societal divisions in the aftermath of violent conflict is challenging yet a necessary aspect (Huma 2014:213).

It is just correct for peace activities to be developed in a manner that inform part of UNHCR work. After all, it is reconciliatory steps that move societies from a 'divided past to shared future'. Building renewed societies is critical to reducing disparities between groups while promoting shared nationhood (Horowitz 1985:599). Even where ethnic politics promote democracy, democratization itself can become a recipe for ethnic mobilization if not properly handled (Welsh 1993). Especially that, violence in ethnic conflict is not elite driven but due to mass sentiments that propel it further. In such situations, what is required is conflict containment, which according to Askander (2003:25), refers to stopping recognized but latent conflict from developing into manifest conflict behavior. It is important because minority groups in refugee camps are more vulnerable than others. The minority refugees in this article should be understood as double sided in meaning. Thus, those refugees that are fewer in numbers by ethnic distribution in their home countries and retain their statistical load even in countries of asylum. Also, there are those that might be numerically more in countries of origin but less in refugee camps. For the purposes of illustration in this piece of work, minority refugees can fall in any of the two categories. For example, the Banyamulenge of DRC constitutes some of the minority groups in their country and they remained so among refugees hosted in Zambia. On the contrary, the Dinka is the largest ethnic group in South Sudan but might be the minority in Ugandan camps. As such, agencies providing protection to refugees should respond with sensitivity to these social stratifications in order to achieve meaningful protection and equality for all.

For example, to put a cap on the arguments regarding the vulnerability of minority groups, the Commission on Human Rights adopted in 2001, highlighted 'the growing frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts regarding minorities in many countries. There are dare and often tragic consequences, and that persons belonging to minorities are particularly vulnerable to displacement through, *inter alia*, population transfers, refugee flows and forced relocation...' These trends have frequently created ethnic skirmishes in refugee settlements, occasionally turning violent, causing death and further displacements. It is against this background and aspiration, that the article advocates for not completely new approaches to refugee protection but reconfiguration of the response parameters. As UNHCR and national governments represent the international community in the support to refugee situations, some degree of international activism for appropriate responses is long overdue.

Notwithstanding the great successes recorded in the refugee protection in the past, the Humanitarian Policy Group Commissioned Report of September 2015, reported that forced displacement has continued to increase. In order to understand the protracted and persistent ethnic-induced conflict between refugee communities, the article has provided a brief recital of the recent clashes in camps. By implication, camp conditions can generate their own obvious problems that should be adapted into the protection framework for resolution. The partitioning of camps provides grounds of sustaining ethnic conflicts between groups. They begin to become boundary-generating tools, thereby complicating relations between the weaker and stronger ethnic communities. As refugees are classically isolated and considered inactive population by the circumstances, their first point of reactivating ancient ethnic skirmishes are the refugee camps. While it is fully acknowledged that refugee work is more of humanitarian in nature, it has to be protected from re-ethnicization and re-territorization by refugee behaviors.

When humanitarian agencies in the camps do not establish a control system, the off shoot of this, is a 'refugee culture' which gradually starts to build up often among the youth categories. This emerging culture is not immune to embryonic split. It starts sprouting refugees along definitions of who is part of a particular group, and who is not. Where the refugee caseload is multi-ethnic, groups and ethnic identities are rapidly embraced as a tool to identify with, in which inequality between refugees becomes a normal image within humanitarian sphere. As earlier indicated, ensuing out of this, is the social hierarchy in which certain refugees are defined as the recipients of international preference. It becomes a replica of life in their home countries, where social relations are confined to stratified social, economic and political inequalities. Latently, the pattern of disparities between the people in the camp, and those who stayed behind is resuscitated and sustained through ethnicized mobilization. The characteristics of place, time, context, beliefs, norms, blood etc, become the defining tools for re-ethnicization and consequently re-territorization of the refugee community. Eventually, these subsets of the refugee community are stimulated into the occurrence of conflicts.

They are often rooted in power struggles and regrettably, many of the persons who face persecution in refugee settlements are members of the minority groups. These power relations are transmitted easily within the social relations compounded by newly created camp culture and longtime carried over inter-ethnic tensions from countries of origin. Sometimes, these cross-border refugee flows affect the ethnic balance of host countries. The fertility for remaking the ethnic dynamics is tied to the fact that many civil wars are fought along ethnic cleavages (Cederman and Girardin 2007, Sambanis 2001). Therefore, the likelihood that refugee flows will have ethnic character in them is quite high. When this happens, resuscitating old habits is not a matter of difficulties.

Local ethnic groups spanning national boundaries with refugee producing countries become the immediate comrades of the refugee communities.

By implication, refugees will have ethnic kinship ties with one or more local groups (Cederman, Girardin and Gleditsch 2009). Sometimes internal tensions in camps can be handled using protection mechanisms, but ethnic kin groups in host communities complicate the protection parameters. As conflict meanders through cross-community human relations, feelings of inadequate fulfilment of basic needs and generated sensation of deprivation become the determinant of its level of violence. More often than not, these feelings are compounded by perceived inadequate protection activities that worsen the detested ethnic power relations among refugees. Importantly, in analyzing the effectiveness of protection measures, focus should not entirely be simply identifying the immediate humanitarian needs but to understand the complex ways in which they interact. The stakes are high as faulty or incomplete analysis may result in inadequate policies, protection and inappropriate solutions.

At worst, it can potentially fuel the cycle of displacement within the host country. For example, the reason for proliferated ethnic conflicts in Africa in recent years is because few modern states are ethnically homogeneous. This is why identifying the complex ways in which humanitarian needs facing refugees exist is vital to effective protection. It is meaningfully important to contextualize these complexities within some basic conflict theories. For example, John Burton (1987, 1990), one of the pioneers of the human needs theory, discusses that conflict is likely to be caused by the need for identity, recognition, security and other such human and societal values. This theoretical perspective is quite adequate to understand human behavior, as it provides a basis for the analysis and resolution of conflict. Also, it can be used to predict conflict and provide a guide to its prevention.

Therefore, the locational scenario as a solution is not sufficient, and only adds to an already conflict-generating context. Burton argues that protracted conflicts are thus attributable to ignoring, suppressing or failing to promote revealed, and non-negotiable needs (Burton 1987). Thus, he argues that human needs are not for trading and can contrast sharply with interests that are negotiable (ibid). He attempted to draw the distinction in the level of negotiability between interests and needs. Fundamental to this view, is the idea that only arrangements that fully satisfy basic human needs can achieve sustainable prevention or resolution of conflict. It dwells on applications for mechanisms that attend more fully to the issues surrounding the dispute.

The appeal in Burtons' theory should allow UNHCR and national governments to establish new and mutually supporting relationships between the adversaries. In fact, Burton's theory indicates that authorities hosting refugees are not precluded as the official security management organ of the State. This means that refugee hosting States should be in the lead in the securitization of camps. Succumbing or complying with refugee protection instruments should not block national authorities from taking decisive and definitive action. It does not substitute this role, because States bear the responsibility to protect. In this sense, aided conflict resolution must aim at determining such human needs and their value to peaceful co-existence in camps. Without coordinated efforts between UNHCR and hosting authorities, protection of refugees can continue to operate in a precarious and conflict-charged ethnic environment.

To complicate matters further, the propensity for humanitarian workers' getting trapped into ethnic orientation of refugee social relations become more approaching in their professional lives. When the staff employed to serve refugees are besieged into ethnic induced social relations, they automatically become the enabling instruments for a difficult path to durable solutions. In practice, solutions to conflicts would require making alterations to any structures, institutions and policies that create a mismatch between the importance of humanitarian aid in short term and the sustainability of peace in the long term benefits. This is one of the means of realigning them with promising prospects for the fulfilment of needs. In short, successful resolution of any conflict must involve satisfying those essential needs of the parties involved. Lack of alternative needs' satisfiers, perpetuates conflict and denotes ineffective approaches. This argument finds support in Burton's human needs theoretical clarifications.

For instance, humanitarian empathy should reflect the presence of appropriate satisfiers which create non-conflictual pursuit of human needs. They should allow for the stimulation of enabled fulfillment of basic human needs such as identity, security, recognition, belongingness, choice and self-actuation. Of course, caution should be exercised as these factors exist within cultural prescriptions and social institutions that can challenge the very chances of succeeding. For example, Avruch and Black (1987) warned against perceiving human needs in isolation of cultural and other social needs. This is an important consideration in determining how basic needs dynamically interact with other social factors. But Burton subscribes to universal patterns of behavior that exist despite the dual inheritance system that combine social-cultural and genetic sources together. He perceives social-cultural desires as only consolidating the universality of the latter needs. Better understanding of the needs perspective should then focus on its attention to a set of collective psychological needs, already outlined above. These needs form the basket of elements that are critical to effective refugee protection.

Ignoring them justifies ethnic conflict to exist in the midst of UNHCR traditional refugee support. It can escalate even when UNHCR and its partners are supporting refugees with humanitarian aid in conformity to international standards. The consequences might be huge and can illuminate conflict with the approved national and international refugee support standards. This article therefore, prescribes that approaches to resolution of ethnic conflicts should be anchored on methodologies that are beyond mere provision of relief aid. From the inclusive peacebuilding point of view, crowded refugee population should not be viewed as cause for escalation of tension. Instead, refugee camps should be conceived as available pool of displaced humans for conflict transformation. Assuming that congested human contacts in camps always escalate and perpetuate conflict, is a dodge away from opportunities that can positively transform relations. It cannot be statistical load alone that stimulate conflict, but conflicting social stitches and economic inequalities that are at play.

Good practices facilitate the qualitative improvement of the universal institution of asylum, thereby more satisfactory and more durable. Doing so makes refugee protection more just and morally superior. This is achievable especially if it becomes the ultimate criterion for evaluating policies and practices within the international system. Those responding to refugee crises should not forget that numerous human needs are rooted in the biological conditions of humans. This means that satisfying them is culturally conditioned or socially determined. If not fulfilled, the feeling by minority ethnic groups is distortedly and mutilated towards conflict and refugee protection work becomes crippled. Once it happens on a large scale, refugee camps become conflict ridden, marking strained social relations among individuals and groups.

The contributory effect of UNHCR work to international peace and security mandate of the United Nations is immediately undermined. The theory of change here is that, human needs satisfaction leads to social harmony. Therefore, comprehensive refugee protection is part of the many approaches to achieve peaceful co-existence. Intervening agencies can mitigate conflict dynamics from all strategic social, economic and political viewpoints. It is important to holistically tackle refugee needs in a manner that prevents attitudinal and behavioral distortions. Ignoring this aspect, in turn, creates conditions that foment conflicts. It is a certain way of preventing personality imbalances which disrupt social accord. Going by Burton's theory, it is the frustration over inadequate psychological needs that produces tensions among refugees. If not checked, the consequences affect the harmonious functioning of institutions that are according them protection.

In this case, once needs are made the basis of analysis and planning, ethnic conflicts will be easier to identify and handle among refugees. That is, exposing refugees to initial peace concepts while in camps would permit them to competently reflect on their situation. This would then lay the foundation for conflict-mitigating protection, a relatively smoother transition to post-conflict reconstruction and perhaps, to a more peaceful society. Unfulfilling the required needs is authenticating deprivation and fermenting latent conflicts into violent ones. Relative Deprivation theory by Johan Gultang (1958) is another tool to understand conflict in ethnically diverse refugee communities. It focuses on comparative deprivation in which one ethnic group identifies what it lacks in relation to what others have. It was instrumental and heavily applied in the social movements of 1960s and 70s aimed at achieving social change. Gultang argues that every conflict has a domain in which it occurs, and this could be intra-actor, intra-group or intra-society variety. Once it leaves the intra-domain, it breeds inter-actor conflicts that could involve bilateral or bi-polar variety. In a dramatic characteristic, these conflicts spill over to multilateral or multipolar typologies with many actors participating in it.

At grand level application, many civil wars involve ethnic groups seeking secession. In these cases, transnational ethnic ties could lead actors in one State to act in solidarity with their ethnic kin in another (Davis and Moore 1997, Moore and Davis 1998). The trend applies in refugee settings as well, especially when the kin ethnic group in host country has less patriotism for their country. As new refugees come through, it becomes a readily available social capital to exploit to serve their skewed interests against other local groups or host authorities. The repercussions can spill over to affect other groups of refugees, and dynamically spoil relations with local communities and their government.

To achieve safety for ethnic minority, UNHCR and host governments have to nurture an institution of asylum which is committed to satisfying critical basic needs. These efforts can imply that UNHCR and its partners are in total acknowledgement of the prevalence or occurrence of conflicts in camps. Humanitarian agencies can have opportunity to provide factual, objective and rational criteria for analyzing and evaluating situations of ethnic tensions in camps. It produces short-to-medium term benefits for refugees and long term contributory effects to the overall peace process in countries of origin. In fact, programmatic strategies should unveil any impediments overshadowing the implementation of protection activities which are peopled. Without robust and deliberate steps, UNHCR and host governments will continue experiencing ethnic conflicts in camps as demonstrated below. Conflicting social grids that exist among refugees cannot be sustainably resolved through the re-territorization and re-ethnicization of refugee camps.

On a global scale, millions of refugees are contained in camps which may be explored with a purpose of understanding social dissolutions and reconfigurations that are taking place. Coupled with this, the

precariousness of camp life and how it is being de-politicized by humanitarian agencies working with refugees should be at the core of protection. For example, the discontents that emerge from migration patterns, heighten nativist sentiment among local populations and are the impetus for the "Sons of the Soil" movements (Weiner 1978). As Michael Brown (1996: 576) writes, '…the sudden influx of refugees can aggravate ethnic problems and further complicate the picture by changing the domestic balance of power.' The arrival of Hutu refugees from Rwanda to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), for instance, led to fighting among Tutsis and Hutus in the eastern provinces. Following these tensions, the DRC has been characterized by perennial tension between the indigenous people and the settlers such as the Banyamulenge. Other countries such as Uganda have equally been affected by ethnic tensions involving refugees they are hosting as illustrated in the succeeding chapters.

## Selected Case Studies

While refugee movements do not necessarily trigger conflict, the selected case studies discussed here-below remain instructive to UNHCR, host governments and other stakeholders on the propensity of ethnicity to trigger conflict in camps. For example, ethnic differences between the Congolese refugees in Zambia, accounted for the re-territorization and re-ethnicinization of their camps. The Banyamulenge were hosted in different camps from the rest of Congolese refugees who claimed to be indigenous or the real sons of the Congolese soil. In practical terms, these ad hoc solutions indirectly redefined the social relations in the camps. The indigenous Congolese refugees viewed the Banyamulenge as merely 'refugees from Congo' because they had 'no authentic sense of belonging' with DRC.

They were perceived as non-sons of the soil but 'strangers' who found themselves in Congo at the time the country was going through violent conflict. These social redefinitions where not official but the approaches applied by national authorities in order to guarantee their safety, seemed to have 'date stamped' these remanufactured identities. This reflects that the identity differentiations of Banyamulenge continue to remain a powerful social construct that defines an alternative path to their protection in countries of asylum such as Zambia. What began as Banyamulenge's ordinary migration into Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) - then the Congo Free State from Rwanda in 1885 has continued to haunt them through redefinitions of their identity.

The term Banyamulenge however grew into prominence in 1967. It was then meant to distinguish them from other pastoral ethnic groups living in the Mulenge or Itobwe area in South Kivu of DRC. Also, it was meant to distinguish them from Rwandan refugees, especially the Tutsi, who started migrating in 1959. It is the question of autochthony, which simply means *"who are the real sons of the soil",* which continues to distort Banyamulenge's social integration. Constant autochthonous narrative, according to Jackson (2006:96) means an individual could be more or less than indigenousness. Such a narrative ignited localized violence that inscribed itself upward into regional instability. As simply put by Apter (1997), people do not just commit political violence without discourse, they need to talk themselves in it. The issue of autochthony which implies having close intimacy with a particular territory became the defining factor in people's relations. Deceptively, they can easily spoil society through exclusionist narrative and politicians used it as secret weapon to play geo-politics among Congolese ethnic groups (Jackson 2006:102).

From time to time, it remained a powerful social concept that defined someone's access to State resources, land rights, and citizenship rights (Geschiere 2009: 322). Being Tutsi pastoralists, the Banyamulenge consolidated the 'belonging' to the high-lying plateau of the Itombwe region of South Kivu (Totberg 2003:65-66). Beginning in 1959, large numbers also came to the region when fleeing violence in Rwanda (Minority at Risk 2004). As indicated by International Crisis Group (2003:2), this history provided a foundation for the strained relations between indigenous Congolese citizens and the Banyamulenge. Unlike the Hutu whose visible migration is believed to have been triggered by the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Banyamulenge lived in the Itombwe plateau long before the advent of colonization. Furthermore, for geopolitical and historical reasons, the Banyamulenge showed a propensity to fragment that has no equivalent among the Hutu.

One would wonder if the whole trajectory of Banyamulenge was a period of cumulative error or not. Following systematic violence against them in DRC, they emerged as Rwanda's most trustworthy allies in the years following the genocide. They were key players in political circumstances that led to the renaming of Zaire to Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC (Banks et al 2009). Shortly after these political transformations, the Banyamulenge's strategic faith continued with the formation of their own faction in which they held important positions (Rotberg 2003). They were a breakaway force from the alliance that fostered political change in DRC. During these developments, the conflict between Banyamulenge and the Congolese security forces continued.

As things advanced, there were aggravated anti-Tutsi feelings among the native Congolese as the peaceful co-existence crumbled. The rift deepened and the Banyamulenge were "remanufactured" through exclusion as 'strangers' or 'those who must go home' by autochthones or the 'authentic' natives. Kaufman (2001) prescribes ethnic hostility, ethnic fears, and the opportunity to mobilize and fight as preconditions in the formation and accession of autochthonous tensions. Perhaps, Kaufman's argument squarely fits into the ethnic trajectories of the Banyamulenge. They do not have to occur in any particular order to trigger feelings of exclusion. Peter Geschiere, one of the most prolific scholars on the issues of autochthony, views identity struggles as 'the flipside of globalization' because of its global spread (Geschiere 2009: 322). He argues that globalization had triggered 'a return to the local' as illustrated by perennial struggles for excluding 'strangers'. Simply, 'emerging from the soil' accords someone with a supposedly indisputable historical link to a particular territory (Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005). Polarization and fragmentation against images of unity for national consciousness is the end result (Bøås 2009).

As early as 2002, there was inadequate literature on the potential role migration played in contributing to internal conflicts (Sambanis 2002). The 'sons of the soil' slogan potently keeps communities at arms-length with each other, as illuminated by the case of DRC conflict. While the causes of instability in DRC might be multi-variety, there is partialist view that they are rooted in the nationality issue of Banyamulenge (Emizet 2000). As nodded by (Brubaker 2004:65), the practice of autochthony has both formal and informal characteristics - sometimes presented as an 'international conspiracy'. But the complex web of uncertainties concerning citizenship is equally a factor (Bøås 2008). Stephen Jackson's (2003:247 in Ceuppens and Geschiere 2005:395) argues that eastern DRC in the late 1990s became '. . .a breakneck chase to exert control over fluctuating identity categories'. He attributed them to dazzling vortex of identities with ever-changing names and historical claims. Brubaker (2004: 116) notes such claims are instrumental in altering the existing identities, drawn between "autochthons" and "allochthons". A 'son of a particular soil' may not have an outright access to resources but it entitles the person to enter the struggle for resources (Mamdani 2002: 505).

As rightly put by Abubakar, in the post-colonial epoch, only those ethnic groups that are considered 'indigenous' could claim full citizenship rights with access to land and local power (Abubakar 2011:11). This is what has kept Banyamulenge in constant struggles against marginalization. They are always being in the history of non 'sons of the soil' or strangers, therefore non 'authentic' Congolese group of people. In this way, autochthony claims can sustain ethnic group identities which, according to Adejumobi are transformed from 'groups in themselves' into 'groups for themselves' (Adejumobi 2005). Simply, identity struggles can either bond or bridge communities under dynamic circumstances. For example, the indigenous Congolese refugees in Zambia perceived themselves as not equal in legal status with the Banyamulenge. They felt that the history of the 'non-authentic' Congolese merely bridged them to the natives. As such, the rise of Banyamulenge's strategic faith continued in the years that followed. This point is critical to the idea of descent rather than attachment to territory or political obedience. It manifests in the contested formation of social solidarity (Clapham 2006: 99).

In the context of forced migration, bonds with indigenousness or with natives, creates peculiar protection needs for affected groups of refugees. In this case, refugees *bonded* with indigenousness were enjoying social harmony while the Banyamulenge who were merely *bridged* with the natives felt insecure in the camps. Occasionally, these circumstances compelled humanitarian agencies to draw assistance along these social trajectories. For instance, the Banyamulenge refugees received international assistance based on their ethnicity (Tutsi) and geographical claims through physical separation from the 'bullies'. With no immediate option to deal with the agitated co-existence, the approach was done at the expense of individual and national patriotism which are lost in the identity struggles. Evidently, the potency of autochthony to produce new trans-national forms of community-building has been part of Banyamulenge refugees in Zambia. Therefore, this article subscribes that re-territorization and re-ethnicization of refugee camps is not so much of what matters. Rather, it is the question of how protection tackles the ongoing redefinitions and reformulation of community identities more effectively.

Zambia ratified the United Nations Refugee Convention (1951 Convention) in addition to signing the 1967 Protocol, as well as being a State party to the 1969 OAU Convention. At country level, the country enacted a Refugee Control Act of 1970.This implies that, as Banyamulenge were granted refugee status by national authorities, it authenticated their nationality and granted status upon them as Congolese refugees and not refugees from Congo. Unfortunately, this validation was being challenged by internal conflict that dissected the refugee caseload and its social tranquility. Such, an attitudinal image was created amid the existing government policy that mitigates security risks associated with hosting refugees from different sides of the same conflict. The policy was applied to safeguard the rights of every refugee, including those with entrenched ethnic differences, hosted in different camps (Brosche and Nilsson 2004:20).

Following this context, the Banyamulenge were exclusively encamped at Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement of Western province while others remained in Meheba Refugee Settlement in North Western

province of Zambia. They could not be protected inclusively with other Congolese ethnic groups, who by default were the autochthones or 'non – strangers'. It should be noted that most of the Congolese refugees in Zambia had left the DRC after 1994 and the trend continued thereafter though on small scale (World Bank 2015:13). By 2014, Zambia was hosting 18, 803 from the DRC, among them Tutsi, whose rights were also enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Refugee Convention as well as the 1981 African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights, among other instruments. These are very important instruments which granted them absolute protection according to international standards. But when these instruments cannot offer in-camp protection to the threatened minority groups, the immediate remedy is relocation according to the Refugee Officer interviewed by the author at Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlement in October 2013).

However, the initiative was problematic from peacebuilding perspective because it demonstrated the weak interface between relief and social rehabilitation in camps. In the absence of conflict management strategy, hostility is reproduced through people's and institutional every day acts. Children born in protracted refugee settings are engulfed into us-them split. This means that reconciling rival communities requires more than money because of psychological, spiritual and cultural determinants of violence (Pugh 1995). In his works, Alex De Waal, highlighted the nature of Hutu refugee camps in eastern DRC after the 1994 Rwandan genocide. He states that the camps were taken over by Hutu extremist forces, who used them as launch pads of their attacks against the new Tutsi- led government in Rwanda. In reaction, a counter Tutsi-led anti-Congolese government rebel movement overran the camps in 1996.

Additionally, in his book, *'The Rwanda Crisis: History of Genocide,'* Gerald Prunier amplifies the findings by De Waal by recounting the 1.2 million Hutu refugees who entered DRC and took charge of the camps with a view to attacking Rwanda (Prunier1995:374)**.** *Oxfam Briefing Paper Number 167 of 22 January 2013* indicated roughly 375,000 Malians fled their country into the neighboring Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger. The refugees belonged to various ethnic groups such as Tuaregs, Arabs, Fulani, and Songhai, coming from both towns and villages with a variety of backgrounds. These complex hierarchal social relations within and between groups affected how refugees organized themselves in camps.

For example, some groups were refusing to share living space and facilities with others (OXFAM 2013:7). The humanitarian community lacked solid strategy to ensure that the specific needs of vulnerable groups were taken into account in camps' emergency programmes (ibid:11). Furthermore, the report indicated that refugees made requests that different ethnic groups should not mix in food distribution queues. This means that refugees took a dismissive tone to international standards on their situation. In her 2019 research findings on *conflict dynamics in the Bidibidi Refugee Settlement in Uganda,* Irene Dawa pointed out that despite the peaceful co-existence among the refugee community, isolated cases of ethnic conflicts existed. The conflicts took place amongst South Sudanese refugees whose social relations were mirrored along the partisan ethnic allegiances of the ongoing conflict in their country.

The researcher noted that the politicization of ethnicity was the defining feature of the war in South Sudan. The research findings gave a flashpoint that the larger proportion of the refugees perceived the Dinka ethnic group as accomplices to the government's commission of crimes against them. As a result, Dinkas were singled out and isolated from the rest of the South Sudanese refugee community. The research further established that tensions over the Dinka presence had occasionally resulted in direct violence – not only in Bidibidi, but also in the Rhino Refugee Camp, as was the case in June 2018 (Dawa 2019). This means the exiled communities lacked a unified 'refugee' identity (AAH, 2017). Using social media outlets, refugees had access to information about what was happening in South Sudan and these impacted refugee relations in the camp. Notably, poor social affairs between the Dinka and Nuer became the result of these fragmented relations (AAH, 2017, World Vision, 2017). These tensions speak to the ethnic differences, packed with violence on both sides of the aisle, with each group seeking to dominate the other in the face of humanitarian agencies.

Without effective conflict transformation mechanisms alongside humanitarian response, it can convincingly be presented that it is almost impossible to cleanse refugees off their grievances as they enter countries of asylum. Also, in May 2018, Danish Refugee Council / Danish Demining Group produced a report on the *Rapid Conflict Assessment conducted in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Uganda.* Important to this work, was the report's highlight of ethnicity as a factor in triggering conflicts between old and new arrivals. As such, the report recommended robust research on the dynamics of various ethnic communities in the settlement in order to bridge ethnic divisions that permeate relations amongst refugees. Also, to interrogate how ethnicity is fragmenting the role of community leaders in promoting harmony within the settlement (Danish Refugee Council / Danish Demining Group 2018). This is important because refugees are not simply the unfortunate by-products of war, but may serve as catalysts for conflicts (Atim 2013:6).

In this regard, refugees are a group of vulnerable mobile community that create insecurity at any stage of their mobility.On 21 June 2018, Xinhua media outlet in Uganda produced a story headlined *UN condemns*

*deadly ethnic violence in South Sudan refugee camp in Uganda.*The report was in reference to UNHCR statement that the UN refugee agency had regretted the tragic loss of life that followed a scuffle between two male refugees of Dinka and Nuer tribesmen at Rhino Refugee Settlement in Arua district on 17 June 2018. 'The acts that caused these deaths and injuries are criminal and the perpetrators must swiftly be brought to book in accordance with the laws of Uganda,' said UNHCR Representative in Uganda. The four Dinka tribesmen were killed in clashes with the Nuer following a dispute between two male refugees while watching a World Cup football match on television at a recreational center. The media quoted the Ugandan police as also alleging that one of the males left the center and when he returned he found that the other had taken his seat. This prompted a heated argument between the two, which led to the fight that in turn sparked off a series of violent attacks in different villages in the Settlement.

While such incidents do not necessarily represent ethnic animosity in every refugee setting, they pin point to the entrenched divisions carried along population dislocations which remain alive even in areas of refuge. In response, UNHCR Head of Sub Office worked with Uganda national police and other humanitarian agencies to relocate the affected refugees to a nearby school for safety. Again, the concepts of re-ethnicization and re-territorization of the camp, was the immediate solution. The police intensified the patrols of the camp and school premises to ensure the safety of the refugees, particularly women and children and humanitarian workers. The situation highlighted some gaps in the nexus between protection and peacebuilding. In fact, Atim (2013:4) indicated that the problem of human displacement in Africa is large and possibly growing in scale. Her work established that a great deal of qualitative evidence suggests that the situation of Africa's displaced people is becoming increasingly problematic.

This situation has not spared even those who succeed in escaping from their country as they are unable to find a safe refuge in other states (Atim 2013:4). Protection for peacebuilding is what is required through methodological prudence to comprehensively protect the rights of refugees. This is not absolutely an issue in the armpit of UNHCR and refugee hosting countries, but the entire international human rights system. So, a refugee is not only a subject of humanitarian situation but a political participant as well. The case studies have demonstrated that side step policies on conflict management in refugee camps cannot adequately support peacebuilding processes. Actually, they tend to amputate the very essence of the institution of asylum in the search for durable solutions. Simply, rethinking new approaches should be galvanized within the existing protection framework, which can de-incentivize ethnic conflicts in the camps. Without control mechanisms, refugees will continue to trigger violence as argued by Clark (2014:235), that refugee settlements can easily become breeding grounds for armed rebellions and criminal networks responsible for serious atrocities.

In fact, they create grounds for discrimination and exclusion of some groups by others in times of crisis and difficulties (Kamlian 2005:98). It leads to ethnic conflicts that are based on identity and residence (Vlassenroot 2002:501). The Banyamulenge case is a classic example where identity and location of residence are the defining tools on people's relations. Yet there is limited systematic understanding of ethnic conflicts in refugee camps and how UNHCR and host governments respond to these situations. The article argues that ethnic power politics in the country of origin are determinant for the onset of ethnic conflict among refugee influxes. Statistical analysis and studies have shown that minority or marginalized ethnic refugees are particularly prone to conflict if they feel sidelined. It is the deepened feeling of insecurity and deprivation among the minority groups that propel them to violent conflicts. For instance, David Francis (2006:3) argues that continental Africa lacked unity among its people. This is so because variables such as language, culture and race are not commonly unified.

He attributed disunity to diverse ethnic groups, religious and historical backgrounds that came with differentiated colonial administrations (Francis 2006:3). To date, these situations all continue to undermine collective solidarity, thereby affecting prospects for durable peace, long term stability, social progress and sustainable development (Francis 2006:3). By all measures, they have continued to create ethnic enclaves that deepen social divisions both in camps and non-refugee hosting sites. For UNHCR and national government hosting refugees, it is important to tip from absolute humanitarian paradigm to protection for inclusive peace that support transitioning from chaos to orderly recovery.

## Protection for Peacebuilding

The disjuncture between peacemaking processes in countries of origin and protection culture in asylum countries, isolates refugees from the affairs affecting them in their countries. In fact, it is by itself an act of promoting the notion of 'distant nationalists', who have nothing to do with the perpetrators of their misery or incapable governments failing to protect them. As such, the refugee camps remain 'peace deficit' areas because they are largely perceived as falling outside the mainstream international cooperative peacebuilding structure. Increased insecurity associated with refugee presence both in hosting communities and their camps exacerbates

this deficit. Meanwhile, numerous research literature on civil conflicts have also indicated that forced population movements have been underwriting regional clustering of wars. The role in clustering conflicts comes with refugees' influence on political tensions both in the original and receiving countries. Therefore, durability of protection should not be entirely determined by the mass numbers of refugees returning home. But more importantly, be measured in combination with the quality of peace values inculcated in the returning populations.

By so doing, UNHCR and refugee hosting governments will have significantly contributed to transitioning returnees for peacebuilding purposes and sustainable recovery. While ad hoc mechanisms such as ethnicized protection are still a viable option in short-term, assessment of their durability should guide the future refugee protection policies. This is important because these initiatives have to be reinforced to support social transformations especially in the African context. Of course, the single-factor theory cannot account for the variation we see in the incidences and intensity of ethnic and internal conflicts in the camps. The truth is that conflicts were often complex and multi-layered and their causes can broadly be categorized into structural factors, accelerators and triggers.

While acknowledging these complexities and multi-layers, there are some tools that can be used to mitigate ethnic conflicts in refugee camps. For example, the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1510 of 12 December 1960 brightened the need to eliminate elements of discrimination among societies. The world leaders ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination on 21 December 1965 (Schwelb 1966:996). Furthermore, in its preamble, the Council Directive issued by the Council of European Union in June 2000 states that; *"the right to equality before the law and protection against discrimination for all persons constitutes a universal right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and the United Nations Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, to which all Member States are signatories".*

In 2002, former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan said 'what begins with the failure to uphold the dignity of one life all too often ends with a calamity for entire nations'. Borrowing from his words, this article acknowledges the slenderness of social repair in refugee camps but durable remedies for the displaced populations should involve more than finding legal solutions. In her report on *New Issues in Refugee Research: Research Paper Number 245* of October 2012, developed for UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service, Jane Elizabeth Lawson did indicate that every year more people get displaced as old problems remain unresolved and new ones emerge. She established that even in areas of displacement such as refugee camps, these people often find themselves surrounded by other conflicts which spill over from the major conflict causing their flight. They might cause conflicts with host communities, rivals living side by side or resulting into other ethnic divisions. These trends are reflective of more people being displaced as opposed to repatriation. Therefore, there should be methodological adjustments to the approaches to mitigate conflicts and nurture a culture of peace amongst the displaced for societal healing.

The imparted knowledge among refugees should form part of the strategy upon return to countries of origin. When protection framework engages refugees in peace activities, it supports the notion of bottom-up recovery process. The unfortunate side of this story, is that the link between refugee peace programmes and post-conflict community peacebuilding is largely unknown (Lawson 2012:1). However, few good example of peace programmes include the Moral Brotherhood and Neighbourhood (MOBAN) in Nakivale refugee settlement in Uganda. MOBAN started after individuals received training by the Jesuit Refugee Service using UNHCR's Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies Peace Education Programme - PEP (ibid:3). It focused on livelihood, mediation, leadership, peace education, and mobilization and sensitization (ibid). Such initiatives consolidate perceptions that participation in camp based peace programmes does not only contribute to the overall social cohesion within camp environments but heal war traumas (Obura, 2002 in Lawson 2012:6). That is, peace programmes are a form of psychosocial intervention (ibid:6).

In theory, UNHCR acknowledges that education for peace, cooperation, conflict resolution and reconciliation are all prerequisites for the durable solution of repatriation and reconstruction efforts (UNHCR, 1995:53). The discourse further states that empowering institutions such as elders' councils, equipping refugees with skills for conflict resolution, peacemaking and administration of justice is needed to rebuild social society (Juma and Suhrke, 2002 in Lawson 2012:6). Refugees can use the knowledge, skills and social networks gathered while in exile to develop strategies for rebuilding a society both socially and politically (Black and Koser 1999:235 in Lawson 2012:6). In addition, psychosocial therapy should be an integral part of the peace package accorded to refugees. It supports a healing process that connect the psychological aspects of someone's

experiences - thoughts, emotions and behavior in relation to his or her wider social experience such as relationships, traditions and culture (PWG 2003:1).

In general, peace programmes in camps can be multi-purpose, saving to instill confidence in refugees to return home, and facilitate peaceful co-existence with host communities and other refugees of different ethnic orientation. Additionally, they support returnees' connection with their communities as active participants in searching for sustainable peace. But strategies to operationalize the intended outcome are directly prevented by three additional themes; (1) programme identification and design; (2) implementation standards and; (3) measuring impact. Overall, Lawson's data revealed that refugee peace programming is influenced by host government's and individual interests of service provider organizations. This means that, within the traditional protection framework, there is room for developing localized conflict management structures in the camps.

This article has evidenced ethnic conflicts in refugee camps to date and has also highlighted the general agreement by the international community to have peace nurtured refugees. However, initiatives to bridge refugee protection to the international peacebuilding community, has not been consolidated beyond indictment of war criminals. This leaves out the critical mass both among refugees and IDPs, thereby missing the opportunity to maximize the peace particles that exist in them. Without protection for peacebuilding tactics, the results are seen in remanufactured group of people, dismissive of what caused their flight through behaviors that perpetuate it in the camps. It also indicates a flawed system, full of gaps in transitional justice, incomplete and non-inclusive peacebuilding in countries producing them. The far reaching consequence, is the incapability to mobilize social capital from every person affected by the conflict.

These are important points of departure from the traditional refugee protection practices to a more peacebuilding oriented approach. For example, Bulcha (1988) cited in Siddiqui (2011) argues that much of the academic research conducted on refugees, particularly in Africa, addresses itself with problems of asylum and protection and less on the conflict dynamics. Thus, in this work, it is argued that contemporary conflicts are largely driven by private conflict industrialists whose motives are at variance with ideals of humanitarianism. For instance, the bi-polar ethnic set up in Rwanda had serious security implications for the whole of Great Lakes region (Reyntjens 1999: 244). Over two decades have passed since the Rwandan genocide, but the remnants of this genocide have continued to undermine the potency of the Great Lakes region to deal with the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo – DRC easily. While Suhrke (1998) views refugee regime as something associated with collective fiasco, manifesting as a symptom as well as a cause of armed conflict, there is room to engage refugees more appropriately.

The fault line is anchored on the inadequate efforts to rebuild relations among refugees. Of course, it should be understood that reconstruction of ethnic identities is not 'one size fits all' solution to all non-ethnic conflicts (Kauffmann, cited in Ramsbotham et al (2005:233). Relief providers in camps should take advantage of the homogenized refugee population to transform relations of the pre-flight periods. Going by views of (Hewstone and Brown 1986), the more contacts there is between conflict parties, the more scope there is for resolution. In fact, scholars such as Nortrup (1989) argues that resolution of ethnic conflicts lies in the redefinition of us-them split. In this case, what needs to be done is the promotion of 'social We-ness'. With numerous protracted refugee situations in many parts of the world, the reality of inadequate vetting of ethnicity and its conflict characteristics among refugee communities, continues to spoil prospects for harmony in refugee camps.

Benedict Anderson calls them 'long distance nationalists' who exacerbate identity politics by endorsing nationalistic and exclusionary movements in countries of origins without experiencing the repercussions directly (Anderson 1998). This means that physical state boundaries are not adequate to offer accurate analysis to inform an effective approach to protection of refugees. In this regard, protection for peacebuilding simply means implementing activities that constitute 'controlled protection' of all displaced populations. Without the required control, conflicts in camps will persist, and may be refueled by what (Harris and Reilly 1998, cited in Jinadu 2007:7) considers a combination of identity based factors with wider perceptions and social injustice. This is pretty possible because, as societies remain containers of pluralism, social identity is put on the edge of active selection and contestation (Demmers 2012:124). Therefore, the safety and sovereignty of identity is determined by modalities of inclusion and exclusion, which are incubated in the structures of communication, power relations and most importantly in the institutional practices (Jabri 1996:134, cited in Demmers 2012:124).

These factors drag the role of UNHCR to appear as though refugees are simply a subset of society detached from the international peacebuilding system. Therefore, the argument in this piece of work is that the world is becoming more aware of this unrealistically missing link. As protection for peacebuilding entails infusing conflict management element in the refugee support system, then the institution of asylum is becoming a more interesting concept than a refugee as a human being. As rightly put by Harris and Reilly (1998:18, cited in Jinadu 2007:7), conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of conflicts that erupt and thrive in various threads of any society. In practical terms, the elites do not always dominate and drive the

conflict. It is the mass sentiments such as those that meander through social structures among refugees that elites exploit to their interest.

The dichotomy of us-them identities is often times mass driven and not elite game which require containment by those that purport to support war victims. The cost of not resolving ethnic conflicts seriously undermines the prospects to prevent more civilian casualties at a larger scale. The United Nations (2002:1-10, cited in Janzekovic 2005:19) reported that contemporary wars were more deadly on the civilian population than combatants. The remedy to ethnic conflict in Africa's refugee camps must therefore be developed on an understanding that conflict is a social system which is peopled. In fact, Lederach advocates strongly that reconciling people should focus on their relationships (Lederach 1997:29). In a statement to the UN Security Council on 24 January 2004, UNHCR High Commissioner, Mr. Antonio Guterres noted that 'refugees return with schooling and new skills......over and over, we see that their participation is necessary for the consolidation of both peace and post-conflict economic recovery'.

This is pretty much possible if refugees are involved in negotiations of a peace agreement, through to peace education and reconciliation activities prior to repatriation (Loescher et al 2007:498). In this regard, UNHCR and other actors should develop protection programmes that jump-start social, cultural and economic resilience as an engine for post conflict development (Nkurunziza 2008). Any feeling of deprivation of certain basic needs can lead to frustration and create an uprising (Davies 1959). Newman (2007) subscribes that prolonged exile of refugees is a clear manifestation of the failure to resolve the conflict. Therefore, addressing root causes of the conflict assists in consolidating the peace gained through other means (African Union 2006:4). Simply put, preparing refugees for successful return profoundly influences public and donor confidence in the reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts (UNHCR 1997:162).

In addition, it is reflective of the confidence being developed among returnees themselves (Petrin 2002:5). It can as well offer critical perspectives on the causes of the conflict itself and contribute to a sense of shared ownership in peacemaking and peacebuilding (Guterres 2009). Experiences of living in peaceful and pluralist societies by refugees can strengthen the reconciliation and democratization processes in their countries of origin (Sarah:2002). But this experience should be exploited to the benefits of refugees themselves, their countries of origin and the institution of asylum too. It is crucial because adequately prepared reintegration process of refugees in their areas of return significantly broadens inclusiveness of national elections in the aftermath of hostilities. Their participation in electoral process, contributes to the recovery process since they accord an opportunity to the divided societies to tackle their problems through the ballot box as opposed to battlefield (Grace and Mooney: 2009).

Whether in exile or as returnees, refugees are an essential component of consolidating peace that compliments international efforts (Reilly 2003). Maximizing reconciliation among exiled people, puts refugees and those who did not flee the war, to reintegrate through identifying their skills, capacities, aspirations and needs. Inclusive reintegration reinforces peace processes and helps create stable and secure conditions that are essential for development objectives to be met (UN 2004). It has immense potential to prevent new or secondary movements (Richard and Saskia 2006). But this peace value should be nurtured during camp life because refugees constitute members of a war-torn society transitioning from civil strife to civil order. Having large proportions of populations in the diaspora undermines State legitimacy (Rabecca and Diego 2008). While repatriation signifies confidence in one's country of origin, it should also be noted that there is no automatic restoration of bond of loyalty between the returnee and the State.

This is because sustainable indicators of State legitimacy are not confined in population's willingness to live within geographical state boundaries. Enjoying peace, productive and dignified lives comes with the establishment of progressive conditions which enable returnees and their communities to exercise social, economic, civil, political and cultural rights (UN 2008:1). Black and Gent (2006) subscribe that the return of refugees is a powerful indicator of the end of the conflict and restoration of normalcy. It may also reflect commencement of healing processes of the disrupted social fabrics (Eastmond 2006). This means that refugees are a product of raptured social fabric, whose repair calls for their unhindered participation. This explains why Fischer (2004) and UNHCR (1998) subscribe to the relationship between refugees and conflict. Therefore, more work is needed to build an enthusiastic system of refugee protection that support social reintegration. It should be a system that, in empirical terms demonstrates how strong social ties amongst refugees harness the transformation of political scene that is driving the conflict. This is what protection for peacebuilding should aim at achieving.

It is vital because when the political landscape is positively transformed, it facilitates the achievement of durable peace (Bunte and Monnier 2011:18-19). Even when the principles guiding refugee regime problematizes its linkage to the peace and security discourses, UNHCR (1998) acknowledges that reintegration of refugees is part of the broader peace process that contributes both to post-conflict reconstruction and national reconciliation. Supporting refugees with relief aid alone, is an inadequate barometer to measure its contribution

to reversing social exclusion amongst populations in displacement. In fact, UNHCR posits that State responsibility and international solidarity are some of the key preconditions for sustained return of refugees (ibid).

Without social restoration amongst refugees, their camps remain the bases for renewed differences that threaten the very essence of international protection. Refugee-hood should never be synonymous with victim-hood because doing so obscures the other side of a refugee. Hence, the failure to understand how the asylum regime factors itself into peace and security discourses. While scholars and researchers have more often used the refugee statistics to understand the velocity of conflicts, failure to acknowledge the multiple roles refugees play in escalating violence, renders the measurement as flawed and unreliable. Even where the information is meant to be shared with prospective donors, the basis is still hollow and insignificant to peacebuilding agenda. In fact, these initiatives produce peace among refugees for short term benefits, which with no time, disintegrates into social divisions upon return to countries of origin. Inclusive social mobilization in refugee camps should be based on respect for equality and human rights for all in transit communities.

This is important as conflict can never be resolved purely by military or political means alone (UNDP 2003:11). Failure to resolve conflicts is attributed to inadequate inclusion of other participatory processes (Cliffe et al 2003). As rightly put by Safer World (2014), insecurity can be characterized by absence of an effective protection system, of paths to redress grievances, of fair access to resources, and of rights. What is needed in protection for peacebuilding is the creation of institutionalized mechanisms for redressing ethnic and other related grievances. When there is tolerance between different ethnic groups, harmony becomes the end product that produces sustainable co-existence as the ultimate goal. It is achievable as long as the protection regime pays attention to geosocial spaces that exist between different ethnic groups in refugee camps. Ignoring these areas in camps, refugees would cling to their national identity in solidarity with traditional social vents by any means available to them, including violence (Bidandi 2018).

In this case, the history and causes of the refugee problems and the epitomes of violence that they present along with solutions should inform meaningful protection to society (ibid). Since the majority of refugees are sheltered in camps in host countries, these sites can be used to enhance all-encompassing human rights protection and peacebuilding activities. Of course, there are misconstrued assertions that encampment and its associated overcrowding contributes to human rights violation. If this was true in its single meaning, then countries with huge demographic proportions would be the most violent and dangerous sites to live. There is no hard evidence to prove this hypothesis. Instead, some countries with least population size have experienced bloody conflicts, therefore the encampment argument remains weak. Without holistic assessment of conflict triggers, overcrowding as a single factor to measure human rights violations may reflect inadequate universalization of it.

In fact, we are being reminded by International Alert (2013) that 'with end of the Cold War and the increasing globalization, the space within which we need to understand and mediate conflict is changing'. This approach is important because Coser (1956:8) argues that conflict is the struggle over values and claims to scarce status and resources. The struggle is meant to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals (ibid). This is the reality despite that UNHCR views classical conflict management as a theatre outside its mandate (Nathan 2000). Logically, handling conflicts is still crucial because refugee camps are not immune to peace spoilers (Loescher et al: 2007:496). While the reality of today calls for peacebuilding element in protection of refugees, UNHCR has remained the humanitarian lead agency of the United Nations common system (Stremlau 1998:26). Moving with time, UNHCR should analytically understand the context in which contemporary refugee protection is implemented. It acts as the basis for understanding the interaction between protection and context.

Once this interaction is fully understood, developing protection activities that avoid negative impacts while netting maximum value from the context is prioritized. Therefore, an integrated approach with United Nations system wide interventions, strengthens UNHCR position in conflict areas (IAP Working Group 2013). As nodded by United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the United Nations system works to ensure coordinated efforts for recovery and peacebuilding early enough in the response to a crisis. Simply, there is need to deploy systems that prefer tolerance of diversity and appreciate differences (Jabri 1996:185, cited in Demmers 2012:124). Even voluntary repatriation which is the most preferred durable solutions cannot hold in the face of heavy dependency on re-ethnicization and re-territorization of refugee camps.

This argument has been supported by Hansen (2018:133) who claims that refugee work thrives in conditions which are rarely ideal, and where repatriation is rarely fully voluntary.However, the research conducted by the Refugee Studies Centre of Oxford University (April 2010:17)indicated that when durable solutions to refugee problems are achieved, it is reflective of offering a promise of restoring stability and security. The research findings indicated that durable solutions are what moves refugee protection beyond the need for international relief aid. This subscription is amplified by what the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres said on 11 November 2019 that 'a peaceful and stable society is only possible when there are

equal opportunities for all and respect for the rights and freedoms for all'. He argued that people are not born to hate, therefore, intolerance is learned and so can be prevented and unlearned. From the Secretary General's statement, it is clear that equal opportunities and respect for diversity can lead to the fulfillment of basic human needs and prevent feelings of relative deprivation of these needs.

These value laden statements by the Secretary General can be echoed by what the British billionaire, Sir Richard Branson once said that 'respect is how you treat everyone, not just those you want to impress'. Again, drawing from these words, protection for peacebuilding should be guided by policies that demolish the 'us-them' split among refugees. Instead, it should facilitate the establishment of a feeling of 'We-ness', transcending across ethnic boundaries. *A UNHCR Commissioned Study on Zambia Refugees Economies: Livelihoods and Challenges 2017:3* recognized the refugee contributions to host-country economies, especially in the face of severe budget cuts to protracted refugee crises. However, this contribution should be protected through an established system of fostering harmony in the midst of ethnic diversity.

In fact, the study conducted by *Norwegian Refugee Council in Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti in 2017,* indicated that supporting refugees should focus on the more fundamental issues such as the protection of the asylum space, enhanced refugee access to basic rights that secure their self-esteem, and those that promote identity as refugees. Unfortunately, the international refugee response often focuses on material needs and considerations (Norwegian Refugee Council 2017:6). Despite this mismatch in prioritization of protection focus, UNHCR's strategies and programmes relating to durable solutions still encourage refugees to develop their own self-reliance. This encouragement is meant to enhance capacities of refugees that would facilitate a strong say in the search for solutions to their own problems (Bakewell 2000). Self-reliance initiatives should be accorded to refugees when still in exile because they support their reintegration upon repatriation. These are tools that would allow them to participate in the rebuilding of their home country (ibid).

For example, Pittway and Bartolomei (2018:77) argued that the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants of 19 September 2016 is the first United Nations (UN) declaration adopted specifically for refugees and migrants. It provided for the roll-out of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework - CRRF (ibid). In this case, CRRF is an approach to enhance refugee responses with emphasis on interventions that are sustainable. One of the items under this approach is the increase of support to countries producing refugees. This is a welcome international commitment, as long as this support is not confined to physical boundaries of countries producing refugees but a tool applicable to the entire framework of international peacebuilding. If the wording 'increased support to countries producing refugees' is understood and applied synonymously with physical boundaries of States, its impact on social transformation will remain in peripheral. It has to be extended to countries hosting refugees because peacebuilding dimensions are affected by cross-border dynamics such as ethnic configurations. Despite some noted reservations about CRRF, the supporting element in it is meant to create conducive conditions for sustainable voluntary repatriation. Therefore, the vision embedded in the CRRF, fits evenly with the need for UNHCR and hosting governments to implement preparatory reconciliation activities amongst ethnic adversaries in the camps. This is very critical to supporting countries of origin using the diaspora citizens. CRRF has also a strong focus on gender which can be exploited by UNHCR programmatic activities to involve women, girls and other marginalized groups into peacebuilding initiatives within the camp settings.

For example, during UNHCR – NGO consultations of June 2018 hosted under the auspices of the Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat (ReDSS) a Kenyan based NGO, CCRF concept was highlighted as important to effective protection. It is a renewed commitment to global solidarity and refugee protection at a time of unprecedented levels of displacements. While this commitment has been recorded, it might also be too early to tabulate its impact in fostering sustainable solutions. In their evaluation report on CRRF performance, UNHCR indicated that voluntary repatriation has remained low since 2016 (UNHCR 2018:10-11). The UN agency considered this situation as reflecting the challenging environment for peacebuilding and the long-term engagement required to effect change in countries of origin (ibid).

This report was covering the period between September 2016 – September 2018, thus two years after the New York Declaration. Based on its findings, prospects for eradicating protracted refugee camps are still dim, therefore refugees will continue being 'warehoused' in camps for unknown period to come. But long before the Declaration, other studies such as that of (Sharpe and Cordova 2009:47) indicated that prolonged time in camps can be used to foster knowledge, attitudes and skills critical to future peacebuilding. In this sense, peace education for refugees has been on the global spotlight for several years. Goal 5 of UNHCR's Agenda for Protection – 'Redoubling the Search for Durable Solutions' – specifically encourages States to facilitate the participation of refugees, including women, in peace and reconciliation processes. It is important to ensure that such agreements duly recognize the right to return and contemplate measures to encourage repatriation, reintegration and reconciliation (ibid).

Despite their knowledge and experience, and their vested interest in resolving conflicts in their countries, refugees are not yet being fully engaged as peace advocates (ibid). The key point is that all refugees need to feel the sense of well-functioning protection system. It should be a system which eliminates the shadow of fear for incapacitation and corrosion to their souls as refugees. This means that hosting governments, UNHCR and the international community should work towards creation of multiplied zones of opportunities for all refugees. When refugees are well prepared to return home through well-functioning system, it shields repatriation from being perceived as an outside agenda in peacebuilding. These reforms, taken together, would have an important impact on rejuvenating the international refugee protection regime and responding to the causes of refugee crises (Simeon 2017:3). The end results include effective protection, manifesting in enhanced personal security of each refugee and growth of positive feelings towards each other.

In addition, it raises willingness to return home upon conditions permitting in countries of origin. It helps those agencies supporting refugees to remain alert to the changes occurring in political landscape and how their work is being impacted. As a result, refugees become receptive and passionate of solution seeking in refugee settlements, demonstrating strong connections with countries of origin. In itself, this is a match with the needed inclusive post-conflict peacebuilding, signaling that many refugees remain on the inner-ring of the process. By implication, repatriating such groups of people, has added value to the peace process. Ignoring these important steps, repatriation would imply mere shifting of responsibility from countries of asylum to their home governments. Unsustainable return becomes the image of the new social order, with problems that triggered the conflict in the first place, still lying active in the bed rocks of social hierarchies of the returning populations. Failure to reintegrate fully contributes to recycled displacements which render camps as indefinite refugee holding cabins. Also, UNHCR's influence to overcome the deficit in the protection or assistance available to refugees is compromised.

In this case, refugee crisis after refugee crisis requires UNHCR to adjust the set of 'universal' standards', and align them to tackle and solve all manifestations of the refugee 'problems', regardless of where, when or how often these happen. This can be realized if UNHCR mandate implementation is benchmarked on the essential requirements as opposed to minimum humanitarian needs. For example, peacemaking is not an essential component of UNHCR work, yet very critical to peacebuilding in multi-ethnic refugee population. The resulting effect is seen in social seizures in which 'bourgeoisies' and 'inferiors' start to emerge in the camp. In a *Briefing Note on CRRF Ethiopia of July 2018,* for example UNHCR acknowledges that the gap between the essential humanitarian services and a sustainable solutions-based response should be addressed in order to harness the CRRF's transformational agenda (UNHCR 2018:9).

As CRRF is a more inclusive approach to refugee responses, which is being reinforced globally by UN Member States' adoption of the New Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) in December 2018, the opportunity can be utilized as well in dealing with ethnic conflicts amongst refugees. Furthermore, the prospect can be exploited to address transnational ethnic tensions that largely incubate and hatch violent conflicts in many African communities. The inclusion of refugees into host communities and national systems, is an added resource towards resolving ethnic conflicts that need to be structured into the bigger responses. In fact, this system is likely to encourage all States to use their best efforts to identify and address the causes of forced displacement (Turk and Garlic 2016:677).

Without inclusion of conflict sensitive programming, the trilogy of solutions to refugee problems – repatriation, resettlement, and local integration - will still be challenged by the 'protracted warehousing' of refugees. Protection for peace mitigates the real risk associated with neglected and protracted situations. Where refugees have little or no scope to contribute to efforts to resolve their plight, may provide fertile ground for peace spoilers to manipulate them towards ethnic hatred against each other. Recovery and reintegration processes are largely fragile processes, therefore involving the participation of ill prepared refugees, compounds this fragility. The OECD also highlighted the need to importantly impart skills and knowledge to refugees, with long term benefits upon return to home countries (Ruaudel and Morrison-Métois 2017:5). The likelihood of majority refugees to participate in repatriation is high when they retain a strong attachment with their homeland and to people who did not flee as refugees. The convenience to achieve this lies in the huge social capital returning home, ultimately providing additional resource to inclusive post-conflict reconstruction. Its viability is strong especially when refugees hold a firm conviction that their opposition to the events is shared by the majority of their compatriots.

For example, Kunz, one of the refugee theorists called this category the 'majority identified refugees' who recognize themselves enthusiastically with the nation, though not with its government (1981:42-3). This category of refugees offers a strong basis to implement protection for peacebuilding with huge opportunities to leverage with countries of origin. While UNHCR retains its monolithic mandate of advocating for the best refugee protection, it can also be the sentinel for the administration of equality for all refugees. Protection for peacebuilding, therefore assumes the higher significance of this calling to respond to the silent cross-border

cries for equality by the minority groups in camps. It can be the ligament which holds displaced populations and their nations together.

## Conclusion

The article has demonstrated that the complexities in nature and scope of contemporary conflicts have set UNHCR's response to the needs of refugees differently. In basic terms, UNHCR mandate in Africa has for several decades been implemented in the contesting 'ambiguities of the soil and belonging' that create conflicts among refugees. Therefore, securing peace agreements in countries discharging refugees or indeed offering safe places to displaced populations without fully understanding these ambiguities is not enough anymore. These viewpoints have been grounded in the basic human needs and relative deprivation theories discussed above, which provided a basis for better understanding of ethnic tensions among refugees. While it is crystal clear that UNHCR is neither a judge nor police force to deal with peace spoilers in the refugee camps, the aspect of the 'soil and belonging' is likely to refasten its position differently with national governments and the peacebuilding agencies of the United Nations.

As the custodian of the international refugee law, more work by UNHCR is also needed to realign its partners along with the new thinking on durable solutions. This article has provided an evidence based argument of ethnic tensions in refugee camps. While this evidence may be minimal to generate a comprehensive conclusion on the stormy nexus between ethnicity and protection for durable solutions, it unveils questions of what protection implies in real meaning beyond the text of the 1951 Convention. Of course, this does not imply in any way that UNHCR does not respond to camp based conflicts. In fact, working with host authorities, UNHCR has always carried out minimal conflict management activities to ensure refugee camps were not turned into hiding enclaves by peace spoilers. In this regard, the Declaration of CRRF has provided a global testimony to change the approach to refugee protection for sustainable solutions.

However, the CRRF which promotes inclusion through 'naturalization' of refugees among other aspects, might fail if those to be accepted are not fully prepared for this process. This does not detract the strength enshrined in the CRRF but it merely illuminates some of the challenges in the face of the concept. Simply put, there is need to deconstruct the traditional practices with realistic application of CRRF to ensure equal protection of all persons of concern to UNHCR. The balancing here is between the 'duty to care' owed to refugees and the 'purpose of this duty' to peace in the long term. In all, UNHCR work is meant to support those considered 'lesser and weaker' populations in need of peace and security. This is so because refugees do not only seek physical and legal protection but also membership in the wider stable polity through long term care and solutions to their problems. Any perceived injustices to exclude the vulnerable ethnic minority refugees from the benefits of refugee-hood, destabilizes the asylum regime and so undermines its purpose in the international peacebuilding community.

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