# Refugees and National Security in Zimbabwe: Emerging issues arising from receiving Africa's Great Lakes Region (GLR) refugees in Zimbabwe.

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## Abstract

The refugee discourse since the 1920s has focused more on humanitarian and the human rights based approach where refugees are viewed just like any other human being with inherent human rights from birth. The approaches being practised and implemented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have largely been human-itarian, but very little attention has been paid to how some refugees end up connected to Non-Traditional Threats (NTTs) such as, but not limited to terrorism and radicalisation, money laundering, human trafficking, gun running, illicit drug trafficking, local community conflict and xenophobia as well as smuggling precious minerals and poaching wildlife. It is the thesis of this article that if refugee administration focus does not shift from humanitarian to national security protection, then refugees can be used to even move biological weapons and small arms which are very instrumental in contemporary violence witnessed in South Sudan, Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Libya and Mali, among other countries. Zimbabwe is not spared from the associated NTTs that have developed over time and gained significant ground in terms of their modus operandi. It is very difficult for security services and other refugee stakeholders to conduct thorough

and conclusive screening methods at points of entry and in the refugee camps owing to several challenges overwhelming the modern state on the one hand and exacerbated by weaknesses presented by the International and Domestic Refugee Laws. In trying to understand and appreciate security threats emanating from receiving refugees in Zimbabwe, this article relied on an exploratory and phenomenological approach that uses the Interpretivism philosophy.

## Research Objectives

The aim of the article is to unpack the discourse on refugees and national security in Zimbabwe as it relates to refugees and asylum seekers hailing from Africa's Great Lakes Region (AGLR). The study further aims to identify and discuss the emerging security threats attendant to receiving refugees in Zimbabwe. This is so because the background of the refugee phenomenon has been consumed by NTTs.

## Research Methodology

This article is a qualitative study on the nexus between refugees and national security in Zimbabwe. Denzin and Lincoln (2013:3) provide that "qualitative research is studying things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense, or interpret phenomenon in terms of meaning." Merriam and Tisdell (2016:6) observe that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their worlds and what meaning they attribute to their experiences." However, in order to come up with in-depth understanding of the issues under study, researchers made the study *Exploratory* and *Phenomenological* using Interpretivism philosophy. Scotland (2012:110) points that "Interpretivism is directed at understanding phenomenon from an individual's perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit." Researchers like Merriam and Tisdell (2016:9) point out that "interpretive research assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality." Chowdhury (2014:433) quoting Merton (1995) contends that "Interpretivism has roots in the philosophical traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology and the German Sociologist Max Weber is generally credited with being the central influence." While this study is backed by constructionist epistemology, it will provide practical contribution towards understanding the emerging issues surrounding the refugee phenomenon in the 21st century.

In terms of coming up with a population sample, the researchers purposefully chose respondents given their diverse experience as follows; two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), one representing the local community and the other one bonafide refugees. The former was composed of Headman Mabuyaye, his assessors and privileged clan members in Mutema Village (Middle Sabi area) while the later was comprised of six (6) bonafide refugees from Rwanda, DRC and Burundi. Furthermore, the researchers interviewed four (4) asylum seekers (an asylum seeker is defined herein as a persons seeking refuge, but is in the country and has not yet been granted refugee status by a refugee authority) whose refugee bid has been rejected but staying at Tongogara Refugee Camp (TRC). The motivating reason to include a category of rejected asylum seekers is that this group tends to divulge more information as their rejection would have been based on national security grounds. From elicitation and in-depth interviews, it emerged that two of them were trained by militias in the jungle of the DRC, though the rigorous training was against their will and the other two were from another GLR state and believed to have been agents.

In-depth interviews were also conducted on 10 respondents drawn from the UNHCR, security forces, the Department of Immigration, Foreign Affairs and community leaders surrounding TRC. The researchers made use of archival materials from existing scarce literature in order to bring a balance to the analysis. According to Ormrod and Leedy (2014:147) "a typical sample size of a phenomenological research has a typical sample size from 5 to 25 individuals, all of whom have had a direct experience with the phenomenon being studied." Lincoln and Lynham (1985:202) recommend sampling, until "a point of saturation or redundancy is reached," that is when no new information is given and they further stated that "in a purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations." Due regard was also considered given the diverse nationalities in the camp (Rwanda, the DRC, Burundi and Uganda). Lastly, the above sample size was chosen based on information saturation.

**The refugee phenomenon in perspective**

**(a) *Refugee definitions*-** For the purpose of this article, the refugee definition provided for by the 1983 Zimbabwe Refugee Act was used. The definitions provided under this Act are inclusive and embrace the international refugee laws such as the UN 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1963 OAU Convention Governing

Specific Aspects of Refugees. This article does not seek to critique the weaknesses and strengths of both the International and Domestic refugee laws, but to unearth emerging issues of national security concern to Zimbabwe. With this in mind, a refugee is defined using the 1983 Refugee Act which says that a refugee is a person who flees his/her country of origin;

(a) Owing to the well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, being outside the country of his/her nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail him/herself to the protection of that country.

(b) Not having a nationality and being outside the county of his former habitual residence, he/she is unable, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is unwilling to return to it.

(c) Owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his/her country of origin or nationality, he/she is compelled to leave his/her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his/her country of origin or nationality.

(d) He/she has been considered a refugee under the Arrangement of the 12th May 1926 and 30th of June 1928 or under Conventions of October 1933 and 10th February 1938, the Protocol of the 14th September 1939, or the constitution of the International Refugee Organ (period 14 WWI &WWII).

(e) He/she is a member of a class of persons declared in terms of subsection (2) to be refugees.

(f) Subject to subsection (3), if the Minister considers that any class of persons are refugees as defined in paragraph (a), (b), (c) or (d) of subsection (1), he/she may declare such class of person to be a refugee, and may at any time amend or revoke such a declaration.

## (b) *The refugee phenomenon in the 21ˢᵗ century*

Refugee movement is an ancient phenomenon that dates back to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians where people sought sanctuary at holy places following the commission crimes or when they were forced to move. However, a more pronounced right to seek asylum in a church was first put into practice by King Ethelberhts of Kent in about AD600. Further, in the Middle Ages, the same was implemented and observed in Europe. After the defeat of Protestantism by the Edict of Fountaibleau

in around 1685, several hundreds of Huguenots fled to England, Germany, Switzerland and South Africa, among other countries. During the period 1881-1920, the world woke up to massive migration of over two million Jewish people in Eastern Europe (McCarthy 1995), but at the beginning of the 19th century, Europe was flooded with Muslims as a result of the Balkan wars (1912-1913), including over one million Armenian refugees who were forced to leave their homes in 1915. Regarding the Balkan war, Zürcher (2003:2) notes that;

> The Balkan War caused many people to leave their homes. Around eight hundred thousand people fled in different directions. In part, these were people simply fleeing the battle zones, but about half of them, some four hundred thousand, were Muslims, who, out of fear for Greek, Serbian or Bulgarian atrocities, followed the retreating Ottoman army. Large numbers of these refugees died from cholera (which had been brought over with the troops arriving from Syria), but those who remained, gravitated towards Constantinople and had to be resettled there or transferred to Asia Minor.

From 1914, millions of people were forced to leave their homes as a result of the outbreak of the First World War in Europe. This triggered the formation of the League of Nations (LON) to try and solve the issues causing conflict to escalate, with the appointment of Fridtjot Nansen in 1921 to assist refugees fleeing from ruthless communist governments (Hassel 1991) under the auspices of the LON. Nansen later expanded the scope of refugees to include Armenians who fled Turkish Asia Minor and further embraced the Assyrians and Turkish. The rise of Nazism (1933-1944) resulted in large numbers of refugees fleeing to Germany. This was amplified by the stripping of citizenship of the Jews following the enactment of Reich Citizenship Act of 1935. The Nansen Commission was dissolved in 1938, paving way for the establishment of the High Commissioner for Refugees under the Protection of the LON. This led to the improvement of the scope and reconfiguration of issues around refugees and to embrace wider populations who fled the debilitating effects of war. During this period, a refugee was regarded as a person with either a Nansen passport or a Certificate of identity issued by the International Organisation. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was established to look into repatriation by the International Refugee Organisation in 1946.

This article also takes note of refugee movements in Africa as a result of civil wars prior to the refugee discourse raised above. The refugee

regime or recognition became pronounced "in December 1950, (after) the UN created the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) responsible for implementing the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees." When the Convention (1951 CRSR0was enacted, it applied mainly to World War 2 refugees and those escaping communism" according to Mansbach and Rafferty (2008:65).

The second wave of the massive movement of people became prominent in the late 20th century with movement from non-Western societies to other parts of the world. Around the 1990s, an estimated 20 million people, most of them who came to Germany from Turkey, Yugoslavia, Italy and Greece, flooded Europe. In Italy, some refugees came from Morocco, Tunisia, and the Philippines. France on the other hand received quite a substantial number of asylum seekers, (Huntington, 2011). Following the Cold War period which culminated into proxy wars in Africa from the period around 1960 to 1990s, a refugee crisis was triggered in Africa, particularly those that were fighting against domination by the white settlers (Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and South Africa). The refugee wave was characterised by the massive movement of men and women, including boys and girls to neighbouring countries where they regrouped in freedom camps in order to fight back and remove colonial domination and subjugation. In an interview with the veterans of the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, a majority of them agreed that this wave of refugees "had a motive to free them from colonial bondage as a result of colonisation following the scramble for Africa and its partition." Examples cited were Zimbabweans who sought refuge in Mozambique and Zambia where they established military bases from which to fight the Smith regime. Mozambicans, Angolans and South Africans also fought for their independence using neighbouring countries as rear bases. One Brigadier General at the Zimbabwe National Defence University (ZNDU) pointed out that "although the Rwandese as led by President Paul Kagame were not fighting colonial occupation that resulted in the 1994 genocide, they were once refugees in Uganda."

The study adds a fourth wave of refugees which Samuel Huntington considered in his epic book *The Clash of Civilisation* as post-independence refugees who according to literature and interview engagements are " those displaced for various reasons, chief among them are inter-state wars, domestic conflicts of ethno-nationalist origin, and authoritarian regimes with appalling human rights records create waves of political refugees leaving their countries of origin in the hope of escaping persecution and violence," (Huntington 2011:175). The last wave of

refugees is the one that this article is interrogating that is the "current wave of migration (which) is in part the product of decolonisation, the establishment of new states and state policies that encouraged or forced people to move," Huntington (2011:199). This is the category where Africa's GLR refugees qualify. What generate interest on these refugees is that they hail from a 'seemingly and perpetually conflict ridden region characterised by violent ethnic motivated violence, banditry, eruption of small wars and persecution to other citizen" acknowledged the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Refugee Committee (ZRC). Those who flee have their rights, safety and freedom trampled upon by militia gangs, their own governments and other third forces, hence the need to find a safer place to live outside their country of origin.

The push factor for substantial migration has always been war and violence. War was interpreted under the traditional narrative as being the only threat to security to the state. During the formative phases of the office of the UNHCR, the majority of asylum seekers were a result of the outbreak of World War 2 and the effects of the hostilities fuelled by the Cold War, resulting in proxy wars in Africa that prompted millions to become refugees in foreign lands. However, the study agrees to the view of one scholar, Otununu who concurs that the 21st century wave of refugees have been a mixture of those affected by war, ethnic tensions, small wars as well as violence and other factors such as "environmental degradation, overpopulation, droughts and famines, debt crisis, political and social instability and economic marginalisation," (Otununu 1992:11).

On the other hand, new information obtained from the Zimbabwe Refugee Committee (ZRC) members suggests that there is an exponential growth in the number of economic migrants trooping into the country trying to find economic opportunities by using the refugee regime as a cover. Although there are genuine cases for asylum, emerging issues suggest that some are victims of human trafficking while others are destined to neighbouring Botswana and South Africa where they will then find unscrupulous means to further travel to Europe. In some instances, others try their luck on resettlement programmes where countries such as the United States of America (USA), Britain, Australia and Canada scout for individuals to settle in their countries.

The above views are not shared by Mamdani (2000:29) who blamed the colonial and post-colonial discrimination laws which he refers to as "the fault lines of current political instabilities and conflicts on the continent lie in the process of the formation of the colonial state, which, resulted in a bifurcated state based on political identities of race and

ethnicity... the colonial regime created a plurality of laws; one for master and subject races and another set of legal regimes for ethnic groups."

Another cause of refugee movements in the 21$^{st}$ century are conflicts induced by ethnic divide, especially in Africa's GLR and other parts of Africa which remains a historical axiom created by the Scramble for Africa and its partition. The views of colonial fault lines can be welcome as part of a discourse analysis, but reality that exist from the studied sets of refugees from the ports of entry, during transit and at Tongogara Refugee Camp, all point out that the causes of people migrating are many, but they are a consequence of war, political instability and persecution in principle. Conclusions drawn from the research interviews are that "the majority who are on the move in the 21$^{st}$ century are searching for greener pastures, following their relatives or friends, part of intelligence infusion, victims of human traffickers and others trying new opportunities to survive."

Worrisome in the discourse of refugees is that the phenomenon has become a threat to national security of receiving states especially after the year 2000 due to emerging multifaceted security threats whose progenitors are taking cover from the perennial human problems. If refugee administration focus does not shift from humanitarian to national security protection, then "refugees can be used to even move biological weapons, small arms (rifles, machine guns grenade launchers and mortars) which are very instrumental in the contemporary violence that has been witnessed in South Sudan, Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, the DRC, Libya and Mali, among other countries. This is compounded by the fact that due to porous borders and weak security institutions, weapons in some countries in Africa are easy to obtain through ' the black market which involve individuals in Europe, the Middle East, South Africa and South East Asia," (Mansbach and Rafferty 2008:622). The argument of this paper is that refugees from Africa's GLR are vulnerable to criminal gangs shrouded in terrorism, drug peddling, human trafficking, cyber espionage and digital intelligence, movement of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). An example is of how Kenya was attacked successively by Al Shabaab which is believed to have been recruiting from refugee camps and Boko Haram in Nigeria is a case in point.

Another security challenge to receiving refugees regards issues of regrouping in a foreign land. Well documented regrouping of refugees in Africa was "that of the 1994 genocide halted by the Tutsi led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) which invaded Rwanda with support from Uganda ... prompting over one million Rwandan Hutu refugees, including 30 000

former Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR) and tens of thousands of militiamen fleeing into DRC," (Williams 2013:86). "By 1994, between 1.7 million and 2 million Rwandans lived in makeshift camps in Zaire and Tanzania," (Steadman and Tanner 2003:1). While in exile, "the FAR used the protection provided by the border to regroup, rearm and prepare to retake power in Kigali," (Stearns 2011:15). "The genocide's organisers and killers blended into the refugee camps in Zaire and used the exodus to attract humanitarian aid ... in that very assistance enabled the militia to regroup and conduct attacks across the border in Rwanda," (Stedman and Tanner 2003:2). As the humanitarian crisis deepened in the refugee camps, the 'genocide perpetrators' consolidated control within the camps and no one helped to separate fighters and refugees as Sadako Ogatta, the High Commissioner for Refugees once narrated: "for two years the perpetrators used humanitarian largesse of the international community to rearm, continue the war in Rwanda and begin a second genocide against Eastern Zaire's sizeable Tutsi population." (ibid). In retaliation, the Rwandan Patriotic Front infiltrated the camps violently to halt regrouping and leading to a contagion effect today.

"During the 1990s, about 15% of refugee crisis fomented refugee militarisation as in the case of Sudan, Liberia, West Bank/Gaza, Afghanistan, Rwanda, Bosnia, East Timor and Burundi," Stedman and Tanner (2003: 2). Refugee camps were used as the seed bed for refugee warriors and disaffected individuals who team up to reclaim their lost community, hence they will fund raise to sustain conflict in their home countries. Further to refugee regrouping, this article separates the role of refugee camps in Southern Africa during the liberation struggle era that was used to regroup and reorganise by freedom fighters. For example, in the case of Zimbabwe, they were given sanctuary by Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. It can be argued that refugees and asylum seekers have a propensity to regroup, strategise and re-organise to reclaim the lost land and inheritance snatched from them by colonisers. The same happened to the South Africans in their quest to fight for freedom, Mozambicans, Namibians and Angolans. The study is not interested in pre-independence refugees whose objective fall under African reconnaissance and the liberation, but post-independence refugees, where multi-faceted threats are using this phenomenon as a cover to further nefarious activities that are detrimental to the national security of the receiving

## Refugee administration views

The article categorises the administration of refugees into three distinct views namely, humanitarian; human rights and security. The humanitarian view (adopted since the 1950s) on refugees suggests that, "too often refugees are perceived as a matter for international charity and not as a political and security problem, yet refugees' problems are intensely political" (Atim 2013: 5). The first thought on refugees has been dominant across the world and has been gravitating around humanitarian and human rights protection where refugees are viewed as any other human being with inherent human rights. This is a liberal view implemented by the United Nations (UN) institutional system, particularly the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), whose Statute states that "the work of the High Commissioner is humanitarian and social and of an entirely non-political character" (UNHCR 1996:4). The mandate involves "creating opportunities that allows those people in need to access protection and assistance" (UNHCR 2012:12). This view is widely shared by many of non-governmental human rights oriented groups, human rights bodies such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and various supranational refugee agencies. The notion ignores the ability of asylum seekers and refugees to import conflict into the host state. For example, Somalis were accused of importing conflict in Kenya through the Al Shabaab while the Rwandans imported conflict into the DRC through the FAC.

The humanitarian and human rights perspectives on global refugee problems have outweighed the national security view (second thought advanced by this study) which is defensive by majoring debates on issues such as the obligation of states not to return refugees under the principle of *non-refoulment*. The *non-refoulment* clause is the most important right accorded to refugees in accordance with Article 33 (1) of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees whereby "No contracting state shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee in any manner whatsoever to the frontiers of territories when his life or freedom would be threatened on account of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group."

The 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa has a stiffer *non-refoulment clause* which gives more protection to the refugees by imploring member states to "use their best endeavours consistent with their respective legislation to receive refugees and to secure the settlement of those refugees who for well-

founded reasons are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin or nationality", further stressing that "no person shall be subjected by a member state to measures such as rejection and the frontier, return or expulsion which would compel him to return to or remain in a territory where his life, physical integrity or liberty would be threatened" (Article 2 of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of the Refugee Problem in Africa). The clause acts like a 'thorn in the flesh' to national security systems as it forbids receiving states to turn back asylum seekers even if they constitute a national security threat.

## The refugee overview - An African perspective

Since human kind has always been on the move globally, Africa is not spared as some pockets have become perennial refugee donors. By the beginning of the international refugee regime, Mansbach and Rafferty (2008, p. 626) note that in Africa "between 1984 and 2004 the number of refugees almost doubled, peaking in 1994 following the Rwandan genocide." The Rwandan genocide hatched over one million refugees scattered across the globe with about 7.8 million refugees (ibid). This follows the Somalia conflicts since 1991 ( the majority of them became refugees in East Africa), Liberia under Charles Taylor (1997) triggering civil wars in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast and resulting in a large movements of people who later became refugees. The Angolan civil war of 2002 donated refugees to Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Chad. Mansbach and Rafferty (ibid) observed that in 2006, the Darfur conflict accounted for 1.6 million refugees placed as people of concern by the UNHCR. After 2010, "the emergence of Boko Haram and Al Shabaab militants triggered a massive movement of people from Nigeria and Somalia respectively in search of peace. The same period saw the eruption of conflicts in the DRC as a result of the renewed fight by M23 rebels. The disputed presidential elections in Burundi led to massive movement of people to the extent that even Zimbabwe felt the impact," opined a member of ZRC and security services.

In the period 2012-2014, there were 59 million refugees in the world and about 25% of these were in Sub Saharan Africa (The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s Population Statics). According to the above statistics, refugees have become a common feature in global politics and International Security Studies (ISS). Regarding Kenya, Kirui and Mwaruvile (2012, p. 266) postulated that "Dadaab refugee camps, Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagadera accommodated over 300 000 refugees as opposed to its 90 000 carrying capacity in 2009

while in 2012, the figures had ballooned to 470 000 refugees." In Zimbabwe, a fluctuating average figure of above ten thousand (10 000) refugees is realised on a monthly basis (Unpublished reports MPSLSW 2016-8), with the majority coming from the Africa's GLR mainly in DRC, Burundi and Rwanda (Rwandans are no longer entertained in Zimbabwe due to the Cessation Clause). This is a reflection that refugees phenomenon has expanded and increased since 1951.

Research findings reveal that "the enormous migration from Africa's GLR is due to ethnic conflicts mainly in Rwanda and North and South Kivu provinces in the DRC, continuous internecine fighting and competition for resources and minerals in the DRC, political tensions among diverse ethnic groups, political persecution, torture and violence, famine and search for economic opportunities in the Southern Hemisphere and developed world." However, there is growing movement within the African continent where people are migrating to more peaceful countries from the conflict zones. To elevate our findings, those from Africa's GLR now migrate southwards where there are less restrictive regional refugee laws coupled by relative peace in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe as preferred destinations. A social welfare practitioner opined that ". . . . . . the 21st century, migration tend to flood Europe, the United States and Canada whose governments are welcome to migrants for cheap labour and resettlement programmes while countries like Zambia are shunned due to stiffer refugee policies that empower security officials to be vigilant."

A glimpse into previous works by Zimbabwean scholars and those beyond Zimbabwe's borders shows that most studies on refugees in Zimbabwe are humanitarian, human rights and social services based. A closer research in the area of study in Zimbabwe was conducted by Teddy Munangwa (Africa University) who focused on refugees and community security. In his findings, he details how refugees have become a problem to the surrounding communities (environs of Tongogara Refugee Camp). Munangwa exposes some security loopholes that are associated with the movement of asylum seekers as they enter the country through Nyamapanda Border Post on their way to the camp and further dwelt on their interactions in the camp and how they affect community security. However, the locus of this research study is premised on a broader range of emerging security issues arising from hosting refugees from Africa's GLR and is not confined to Tongogara Refugee Camp and its environs, but extends to those in safe custody, who stay in Mutare, Harare and the security loopholes exploited at the port of entry and associated security challenges.

## Zimbabwe refugees and national security- A security viewpoint

The pointers below show how Zimbabwe is vulnerable in terms of security threats by receiving refugees from Africa's GLR. This is so given that the refugees in question are hailing from a perpetually conflict zone and they take advantage of international refugee laws and weaknesses at the points of entry.

### Background to refugees in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe hosts an average of 10 000 refugees per month from conflict areas Africa's GLR; namely Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda (Unpublished reports MPSLSW 2016). Zimbabwe hosts refugees from 22 African countries after satisfying international refugee claims. A monthly fluctuating figure averages 10 000, refugees with the majority hailing from Africa's GLR including Burundi, Rwanda, the DRC and Uganda. Baregu (2011:1) observed that "the region has become the home of violent and prolonged conflicts that have caused untold suffering and blocked any meaningful socio-economic progress." This is due to a "multiplicity of actors and complexity of interests" (ibid: 14). These include imperialists, plunderers, drug barons, gun runners, mercenaries, private military, war lords, money launderers and globalisers, lords of poverty, blue berets, ambulance chasers and civil society. As conflict ensues, some participants run away and decide to migrate to various countries including Zimbabwe where they find safe sanctuaries either to retreat from these activities or find other safe places to continue their operations.

### Refugee points of entry

Africa's GLR asylum seekers who come to Zimbabwe use three main legal entry points which are Chirundu, Nyamapanda and Forbes Border posts to gain passage into Zimbabwe. The study reveals that asylum seekers use both legal and illegal entry points at Chirundu, Forbes and Nyamapanda Border posts. According to the Department of Immigration and ZRP formerly the Border Control Unit, there is a challenge in dealing with those refugees who use illegal points of entry. If a potential refugee is apprehended at any point outside the border point, the immigration officials request any travel documents and for failure to produce any, they are sent to the ZRP who together with other stakeholders, review whether the subjects are genuine refugees. If they

are satisfied during screening that they are asylum seekers, they are given travel warrants to go to TRC or they are transported through the prison system to Mutare Remand Prison. Thereafter transport is organised with assistance of UNHCR to ferry them to TRC, (Interviews with Nyamapanda ZRP Border Control and Department of Immigration August 2018).

At Chirundu border post, the one stop border post opens avenues of further manipulation by refugees who take advantage of the common zone and masquerade as Zambians. On the other side, they are assisted by Zambians to canoe across the Zambezi River for a fee and are left at the Zimbabwean side. The Zambians have developed settlements along the border and the settlements give some sought of concealment. Zimbabwe has wildlife and jungle forests, so asylum seekers take advantage of this to cross the borders unseen.

## Triggers of movement

The main trigger of movement from Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and the DRC has been "war, ethnic and tribal conflicts, search for greener pastures, family reunions, militia led persecution and government crackdown to dissident and opposing voices," said a security source with vast experience and knowledge on Africa's GLR and has been part of the SADC Mission in the DRC during the 1997 campaign named "Operation Sovereign Legitimacy." The same view was asserted by the Refugee Status Determination Officer and the Camp Administrator who normally conduct initial interviews as soon as asylum seekers arrive in the camp. At Chirundu border post, interaction between the Department of Immigration, the Police Intelligence and the Criminal Investigation Directorate (CID) (Interviews 2018) to "conflict induced movement, searching for greener pastures, fugitive, victims of human trafficking and willingly trafficked and conflict to some is a cover for their economic endeavours."

The causes of refugee movement have been generic and widely written about and it is not new information. However, concern for this article is the continued migration of Africa's GLR asylum seekers arising from perpetual conflicts in the DRC, Burundi and instability in Uganda and Rwanda which has prompted a new global thinking anchored on the need to balance the national security obligation in the receiving state and the International Refugee Laws. As such, the conflicts, regardless of diversity, have become a perpetual feature and hence the advent of

NTTs. There are inherent security threats that arise from hosting refugees from that region.

**Emerging security issues and the refuge phenomenon**

From the study, there are various emerging security issues that are being realised as a result of hosting refugees in Zimbabwe;

**(a) *Presence of military personnel, intelligence operatives, political activists and other criminal elements*:**

The structural composition of refugees include former officers from the military, intelligence and political activists with the majority of them coming from the volatile North and South Kivu provinces in the DRC. According to the members of the ZRC and initial screening, some confirm participating in the conflicts as members of the rebel groups like *Mouvement du 23 Mars* (M23) which fragmented in November 2013 and there are more than 70 active groups in the region, FDLR and *Mai Mai* militias (Stearns etal (2013), while some are comprised of intelligence operatives on spying missions, military deserters, smugglers and fugitives. This naturally heightens national security levels in the recipient state. Within the refugee group, the study reveals that the refugee phenomenon in Zimbabwe has also been manipulated by political activists, self-exiled journalists etc. In addition, researchers noted a steady increase in the number youths (youth bulge) whereby the camps are receiving a higher number of the economically active age, some with their professional qualifications suggestive of those scouting for economic opportunities. Some would have obtained degrees in their home countries, diplomas, certificates while others are entrepreneurs.

**(b) *Extra territorial operations*:**

Among the Rwandan Hutu refugee community, the study reveals suspicion that the Kagame-led government is expanding its extra-territorial scope and clandestine offensive operations in the region, including Zimbabwe in search of the "perpetrators of the 1994 genocide." According to the majority of Rwandan refugees interviewed, the idea of establishing an embassy and an airline by the Rwandan government in Zimbabwe is to allow for easy penetration by their intelligence operatives who use deep cover to conceal their motives. The

community is shaken by the move and fear for their lives, thinking that one day they may lose their lives like the case of Patrick Karegeya, the late Rwandan spy chief who was assassinated in South Africa, Gatehouse (2014). Although it is illegal to conduct intelligence activities in a country where one is not declared, it is a standard practice the world over that some countries send operatives clandestinely into host countries to undertake secret spying missions in another territory. This is one challenge that Zimbabwe may grapple with, given the alleged tactical moves by the Rwandan government to open an embassy in Zimbabwe as well as an airline as revealed by some respondents.

Strategically, "there is suspicion that the covert military and intelligence personnel can be on spying missions to understand the strength and capacity of the host country's security systems to enable their country to exploit opportunities," said a security source. In this case, they understand the prison system, immigration, the strengths and weaknesses of security systems of a receiving state during reception, interviews, granting status and life in a refugee camp as well as in Zimbabwe in general.

### (c) Illicit drug and human trafficking:

From the data gathered from Security Services (June 2017 to March 2019) such as the ZRP, ZNA, ZPCS and the Department of Immigration, there are "cases of illicit drug trafficking and peddling, human and child trafficking, smuggling of various contraband and money laundering as some of the challenges encountered in refugee administration." These challenges are difficult to thwart and eliminate because they comprise of a well-knit chain and syndicates. Regarding illicit drug trafficking, one military source opined that "although it is not well established in the camp, there are few cases in the past where refugees were implicated in the illicit business."

The ZRC during its sittings usually record cases of unaccompanied minors, some of them victims of human trafficking for child labour purposes, while some end up being sexually victimised. One member of the ZRC reveals that, "during refugee status determination interviews, some interviewees end up failing to substantiate their claims, pointing to coached narratives which are suggestive of people being trafficked."

During field interviews at Harare Remand Prison (February 2019) and Mutare Remand Prison (October 2018) with potential refugees from the DRC (3), Burundians (2) and (2) Ethiopians, it emerged that the majority of those who seek refuge in Zimbabwe are trafficked to South

Africa, where some naturalised and concealed in the vast country by their friends in businesses and others are eventually smuggled to Europe. The refugee department concurs with the view point that cases of human trafficking are becoming rampant, with refugees coming from Africa's GLR including Ethiopians and Somalis. Some of the reasons cited include;

### (d) Public health and human security issues:

Given the movement of people from countries such as the DRC which has been hit by the Ebola scare, it cannot be ignored that diseases are spread across the borders. What is more devastating is that the majority of asylum seekers use illegal points to gain entry into the country, hence chances are that they would have evaded screening at the legal point of entry. So the chances of spreading the disease are very high. Even during transit, they mix a lot, including being ferried by haulage truckers. Health scares can become a national security issue as it can lead to hopelessness and become a burden to the national budget. In addition, a nation of ill people can face challenges of economic development and growth as financial resources are constantly channelled towards public health and preventive measures at the expense of other developmental projects.

Communities surrounding the refugee camp fear diseases such as Ebola and other forms of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). What traumatises the community more is the Ebola scare, especially when there are periodic outbreaks in the DRC and surrounding countries. Research has established that there are no Ebola cases recorded in Zimbabwean refugee camps so far, although the MHCC has been on the ready and anticipating for any eventualities. In some countries, Ebola is spread through population movement putting, a heavy burden and straining resources of the receiving state. Some locals interviewed revealed of a type of STD that is dangerous and is experienced around West Africa with a contagious effect to Africa's GLR. This kind of STD is so dangerous and difficult to find a cure for. One security concern that is raised is that it burdens the treasury given the precarious situation of Third world economies. It therefore affects the capacity of the receiving states to protect its citizens from the scourge of diseases and that of refugees.

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## (e) Camp Violence:

Violence and vigilante connected cases are part of national security threats the country is grappling with. A good example cited is of May 2015, when the TRC woke up to violent scenes believed to have been hatched and masterminded by Rwandan and Congolese refugees demonstrating at the camp following a misunderstanding with the camp authorities. They destroyed property and threatened officials with violence, including the members of the UNHCR. This study assumes that there are many violence cases where suspicious refugees sometimes run amok and are involved in acts that threaten national security in Zimbabwe. If security details react to these acts, they are exaggerated thereby casting the name of the country in bad light to the international community. Moreover, a culture of violence and restlessness is not good for a country and once a mind-set of violent activism consumes the local communities, then the areas become ungovernable and can become oasis for lawlessness, dissident and hooliganism.

## (f) Dealing with precious minerals and poaching:

Interviews were conducted at Mutare Remand Prison (October 2018) with a genuine refugee who was convicted of trespassing at Chiadzwa diamond fields. The one-on-one interview revealed that the subject of interest was facing difficult times to survive and balance social problems. Hence he was advised by friends to go to the diamond fields. The reason of subject's presence at the diamond fields was to try and survive. The motive was thus to partake in either illegal diamond panning or to find ways to buy the mineral illegally for himself or for a well-knit syndicate. Observation of the refugee in question shows he was poor and thus could not be an established buyer but was a 'front' for unscrupulous dealers. However, since the purpose of the interview was not to unearth any rackets, it ended there. Therefore, if left unmonitored, refugees can be conduits for illicit mineral dealings and poaching. In areas around Mutare, there were concerns from interviewed citizens that some of the refugees are suspected to be dealing in precious minerals. There were also hints of some unscrupulous personalities who are used to poach wildlife in the nearby conservancy. All this can point to underworld syndicates, including buyers connected to refugees or among themselves having established links from their home countries.

### (g) Deforestation for energy purposes and land degradation:

In another case unearthed during the field study, refugees at the camp particularly those from Rwanda cut down indigenous trees and burn them in kilns to produce charcoal for enterprising purposes. Some refugees also mould bricks downstream of Save River. In most cases, they are up in arms with ZRP officers at Chipangai Police station and Environmental Management Authority (EMA) officers. An environment officer based in Chipinge town and the camp administrator all confirmed the sad reality. A brief survey conducted by the researchers in the forests closer to the refugee camp showed big kilns burning around the vast forests. Etimates show that one kiln can produce more than 50 or even up to 80 bags of ready charcoal. In order to understand this sad reality, researchers went on to randomly engage refugees in the camp and they confirmed that charcoal has become a source of energy in the camp while the excess is being sold to travellers from Chipinge, Harare and Mutare, among others areas. A local village head, *Mutape* Muzondakaya (Interview held in August 2018) who lives in Chibuwe area weighed in by suggesting that ". . . . one bad thing about the charcoal business is that it has become contagious to the locals and they are now also into that business, a thing that they never did before." It can be deduced that this causes environmental insecurity with far reaching consequences for the generations to come.

### (h) Importation of unresolved conflicts:

Refugees also bring with them unresolved colonial, tribal, ethnic and regional conflicts. This is so because the region has been perpetually in conflict. Kanyangara (2016:1) posits that Africa's GLR "constitutes a complex network of political and economic interactions with interlinked conflicts and common fundamental problems that emanate from post-colonial challenges." With rising conflicts, induced population movement at regional and the global scale is making many nations vulnerable to cross-pollination of national security threats, and Zimbabwe is not an exception. As such, it is the contention of this paper that refugees and asylum seekers pose a threat to the national security of a host country.

### (i) Potential terrorism threat:

Although issues of terrorism have not been pronounced in Zimbabwe, pointers are that investigations to the terrorist attacks in France and

other parts of Europe in 2015 were connected to refugees from North Africa, Yemen and Syria which saw "over three million two hundred people living in neighbouring countries and the number has been exponentially increasing from areas dominated by terrorist networks to various parts of Europe," (Guard 2015, p. 3). This is because as migrants depart from the source country, they are vulnerable to manipulation into committing illicit and odious crimes. Others are recruited to become hardened and trained terrorists. These underworld dealings which are now rampant and rife in the refugee phenomenon have the propensity to weaken the national security system of the receiving states. Gil (1992: 268) concurred, arguing there is "need for refugee problem to be analysed as a political and security problem, not just a humanitarian undertaking', further asserting that, "hosting refugees accelerates conflicts in the host state."

> With this in mind, religious fundamentalism and terrorism linkages may seem remote, but "Islam connected scholarships and humanitarian aid is given to refugees as well. In the case of TRC, the Moslem community is divided along Sunni and Shia, while ethnically the Hutu and Tutsi are divided on the one hand" opined an interviewed security source. In a security sense, most of refugees are operatives under cover who can even be used for assassination missions. Critically thinking, compromised refugees can be used to conduct bad activities in a host country because they have a safe haven and cannot be traced because their true identity is not biologically known.

From the few examples above, it can be deduced that hosting refugees, although it is an international obligation of member states, opens a host country to multifaceted threats of national security. This justifies why this research propounds that refugee problems should be analysed from a national security perspective, apart from, and in addition to humanitarian and human rights dimensions which has been the international norm. The current refugee regime (based on the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status on Refugees) places emphasis on mobilising resources for the welfare of refugees and upholding their democratic rights in the receiving states, but then, it places little and in some instances ignores the new threats that have been brought about by the phenomenon. The UNHCR as the vanguard should put at the fore and accept that refugees have become a source of new threats (NTTs) outside war.

While the nexus between national security and hosting refugees has attracted international attention in Europe and the USA, the area has not

been given much relevance in Zimbabwe's national security studies as there are no textbooks or academic publications available on this problem area. One of the motivating reasons that generate interest in the area is that Zimbabwe receives refugees from conflict ridden Africa's GLR. The area has been academically deserted, left as a humanitarian concern for people in search of security for their life and families. What is not placed at the fore of refugee status is bringing out the academic and security implications surrounding the wholesale migration of Africa's GLR asylum seekers into Zimbabwe.

## Practicalising the securitisation theory: Labelling refugee pheno-menon as NTT to Zimbabwe

To understand and evaluate national security and refugees as well as emerging issues in Zimbabwe, the study relied on Securitisation Theory (ST). The main proponents of ST are Ole Waever (the originator), Barry Buzan and Jaap de Wilde and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 1994).

The ST was propounded by the Copenhagen School (CS) in Europe after the collapse of the Cold War (CW). The theory rose to prominence in the field of ISS in early 1990s when new threats outside war emerged under a unipolar system of international relations. It reversed the Clausewitz politics of war as a means to an end. Buzan and Weaver (2003, p. 491) opines that Securitisation is a successful speech act "through which an-inter subjective understanding is constructed within a political community to treat something as an existential threat to a valued referent object, and to enable a call for urgent and exceptional measures to deal with the threat."

Redefining security after the CW period, scholars like Ralf Emmers in Collins (2016, p. 169) reasoned that the CS was incubated at the Conflict and Peace Research Institute (COPRI) with sole motive for "rethinking security and broadening it through securitisation and de-securitisation. It involves how issues become matters of security and how they are removed [from being security issues]." The CS developed five general categories of security and these are, "environmental security, economic security, military security, societal security and political security," (ibid). Therefore, the CS rose as a result of the need to depart from a traditionalist view on security to human security that focuses on other threats outside the military. It therefore assists in threat analysis and provides a framework for discussion by legitimate authorities.

The CS argues that "our securitisation approach is radically constructivist regarding security, which ultimately is a specific form of social praxis. Security is a quality actors inject into issues by securitising them which means to stage them on the political arena... and then to have them accepted by a sufficient audience to sanction extraordinary defensive moves." Buzan (1998, p. 204). Therefore, securitisation according to Buzan (1998, p. 26) is anchored on three pillars namely "the existential threat, emergency action and effects of inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules." Expanding on the three pillars, Munster (2005, p. 3) asserts that "existential threats are those issues that threaten some kind of a referent object (state) and it requires exceptional measures to protect the threatened referent object which then legitimises the breaking of normal democratic procedures."

Digesting what is contained above, it can be observed that for an issue to be securitised "it is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure," Buzan (1998, p. 23). So going by the view of the CS, the referent object has security actors who identify the threat and move towards securitising the threat if it poses danger to the survival of the state thereafter; extra ordinary measures are used to repel the threat.

For the securitisation process to be successful "the securitising act is negotiated between securitiser [state] and audience that is internally within the unit. The securitising agent can obtain permission to override rules that would otherwise bind it," Buzan (1998, p. 26). However, to kick start the securitising move, the securitising actor needs to perform a speech act that is the continuous uttering of the existence of the threat to convince the relevant audience such as politicians, military personnel, public opinion and Joint Operations Command (JOC) in the case of Zimbabwe. If the audience accept, the issue can be deemed an existential threat to the state. Thus, Securitisation is based on the survival and priority of action to avert a security failure. Thus ST provides a step by step process to identify threats and allows for the use of extra ordinary measures to deal with such threats.

The use of the ST comes handy to this study in that, it offers both descriptive and analytical framework on how emerging issues are securitised to become existential threat to a state that are dealt with by using extra ordinary security measures. This is so because the refugee phenomenon has been under siege from threats, such as terrorism, smuggling, subversive elements and human trafficking which has been feasting from the mass movement of people beyond their borders. By pushing for the securitisation of threats associated with receiving

refugees from Africa's GLR in Zimbabwe, the motive is not to curtail the freedom of choice in terms of asylum seeking as denoted by the International Law. It is not a way of imposing 'martial law' on refugees' matters but a realistic move that accepts the elusiveness of NTT as a component eminent and inevitable in the contemporary refugee discourse. The NTT architects and apparatchiks are using asylum seeking as a cover for their illicit and detrimental actions to national security of the receiving states. In other words, the study moves to place national security lenses on the asylum seeking and refugee administration as a way of trying to weed out these new security threats that have overtaken the refugee management.

To curtail the abuse of the securitisation process as in the case in Africa, the study proposes an all stakeholder inclusive security approach that includes non-state actors with wide experience in the form of a National Security Commission and perhaps to expand the scope of JOC in the case of Zimbabwe. This involves introducing securitisation into political sphere where debates and processes are stimulated. Lastly, the issue of securitisation need not remain blurred in the case of refugees to other stakeholders, but an inclusive all stakeholders approach.

## Conclusion

The article concludes that the refugee phenomenon has been taken advantage of by NTTs progenitors such as terrorists, human and drug traffickers, gun runners, mineral dealers and economic migrants, among others. The refugee discourse in Zimbabwe has been dominated by economic migrants who are scouting for economic opportunities, while others use the refugee discourse as a cover for their ulterior motives, given the weaknesses inherent in the available refugee legislation. Most asylum seekers are victims of human trafficking with recruiters targeting to use disadvantaged women and minors as a source of cheap labour as they get commission from selling them. The net effect is that Zimbabwe is used as a transit zone by traffickers, in the process creating bilateral and diplomatic challenges between Zimbabwe and her neighbours, thereby affecting national security. It was also established that although Zimbabwe has not succumbed to acts of terrorism, the article suggests that they can be a potential to create sleeper cells with the hope of conducting future operations and hence there is need for security services to keep track and be empowered by law to search, seize any weapons and detain any suspected individuals with or without a warrant of arrest.

The article has shown that refugees are now involved in the search for precious minerals and are also alleged to be involved in poaching activities in areas surrounding the refugee camps. In a nutshell, the refugee phenomenon in Zimbabwe has proved that there are areas of security concern and as such, they need to be viewed as sources of security threats apart from the humanitarian views that have permeated literature regarding the movement of people in Africa due to persistent wars and political instability. From this, there is need to put to the fore the security issues around the new refugee discourse and securitisation of the same can lighten the security burden and empower security services and stakeholders to identify and thwart emerging threats emanating from receiving refugees from Africa's GLR and beyond.

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