

ARMED CONFLICTS AND FORCED MIGRATION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to analyze the current conflicts in the Great Lakes Region and the subsequent displacement from the early 1960s to date. Most of the causes to the conflicts are related to colonialism and post colonial struggles and poor governance. The paper traces the evolution of armed conflicts and forced migration in the Great Lakes Region, identifying Tanzania as the only exception of armed conflict although it is host to many refugees from the region. The paper concludes by proposing some recommendations.

Key Terms : Great Lakes Region, Armed conflict, Forced Migration

1. ARMED CONFLICTS AND FORCED MIGRATION IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION OF AFRICA: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

For the purpose of this article, the Great Lakes Region of Africa¹ comprises Rwanda, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, and Uganda. Apart from Tanzania, all the other countries in the Great Lakes Region (GLR) have experienced some sort of armed conflict since independence with the climax in 1998 when the conflict in DRC drew in five African countries in what was known as Africa's First World War. The region is characterized by armed conflict, violence, massive internal displacement, and refugees. According to United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) (2011), there are about nearly 3.3 million people in the Central Africa and the Great Lakes sub region considered as people of concern, many of whom are refugees and asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

According to Ploughshares Armed

¹ For details see <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/blr.pdf>

Conflicts Report (2010), there were eleven conflicts in Africa while ten countries were hosting conflicts which translated to 20 per cent in the region and accounted for 39.3 per cent of the world conflicts. Out of ten countries hosting conflicts, three (Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Uganda) were from the Great Lakes Region (The Ploughshares Monitor, Autumn 2010). This meant that these conflicts led to internal displacement within these countries as well as generating refugees to the neighboring countries and beyond.

But these conflicts and displacement are not new in the region. The displacement which took place in the Great Lakes region during the 1960s is of particular significance in view of the crisis which unfolded there some 30 years later. The independence of the Belgian colony of the Congo in 1960, and of the Belgian-administered trusteeship territory of Ruanda-Urundi (which became the two states of Rwanda and Burundi) two years later, was accompanied by widespread bloodletting and a full-blown international crisis. In the 1960s, as in the 1990s, the epicenter of the political violence that spawned refugee movements throughout the region was Rwanda (UNHCR, 2000).

Murison (2003) concurs that the politics of the Great Lakes region are shaped in crucial respects by forced migration. Before independence, at least 500,000 Rwandese and Burundians moved to

neighboring countries for economic or political reasons. The independent Republic of Rwanda was born in a refugee crisis in 1962, and every subsequent political crisis (1973, 1990, 1994, 1996, and 1997-8) have resulted in large-scale displacement. Burundians fled their country in large numbers in 1972, 1988, and 1993-2001, eventually forming one of Africa's largest groups of refugees. The conflicts in Kivu in eastern Congo since 1993 have resulted in one of the world's worst situations of internal displacement. In addition, the long-term presence of Rwandan and Burundian refugees has had a decisive effect on the domestic politics of the main host states, Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Rwanda and Burundi themselves, which have both hosted large numbers of refugees from each other (Murison,2003).

In the early 1960s, more than 100,000 Rwandese refugees entered the neighboring countries of Burundi, Tanzania, DRC, and Uganda. They sought asylum from the violence emerging from the social and political change within Rwanda. These refugees, and the generations they produced, remained in exile for more than thirty years until political alterations in Rwanda facilitated their return in 1994. Simultaneously, as many of the refugees from the 1960s returned to Rwanda, a new wave of refugees left Rwanda following the 1994 genocide and the installation of a new government predominately composed of returning members of the Rwandese Diaspora (Murison,2003).

Uganda has also had its good share of armed conflicts forced displacement. The first major incident was the expulsion of Asian by Idi Amin in 1973. This was followed by many northerners especially the Langis, where the ousted president, Dr Apollo Milton Obote hailed from. Many fled to the neighboring countries as well as in Europe and North America. This went on with the 1981 to 1986 guerilla war which brought Yoweri Museveni to power in 1986. In Northern Uganda though, there emerged a rebellion which would later be led by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) under Joseph Kony which goes on to date. He has since expanded his operations to South Sudan, Central African Republic, and DRC. In June 2009, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) menaces in the eastern DRC forced some 5,000 refugees to flee their homes and seek asylum in the Haut Mbomou, Central African Republic (CAR). Subsequently, in November 2009, the chaotic

situation in DRC's Equateur Province led some 18,000 refugees to flee to the CAR. The Republic of the Congo hosts more than 114,700 refugees from the DRC's Equateur Province (UNHCR, 2011).

In Burundi, it was expected that the results of elections in 2010 would consolidate peace and build an environment conducive to development, but the opposition's withdrawal from the electoral process could threaten that stability. Uganda is host to over 470,000 IDPs mainly from the LRA conflict down from 1.8 million in late 1990s as well as refugees from DRC, Kenya, and Sudan (UNHCR, 2011). In Rwanda, the Government has called on UNHCR to consider invoking the cessation clause for Rwandan refugees in December 2011. Millions of people, mainly ethnic Hutus, fled Rwanda after the bloody ethnic conflict in 1994. Since then, 3.4 million refugees have returned. But 60,000-65,000 Rwandans still live in asylum countries, including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Uganda. The government has long called for the cessation of refugee status, saying peace has returned to the country and refugees have nothing to fear (UNHCR, 2009). But the refugees are skeptical of this peace.

In July 2010 Ugandan police in collaboration with Rwanda mounted an operation to round up and deport some 1,700 refugees from Nakivale and Kyaka refugee settlements in southwest Uganda. In Nakivale settlement, Rwandese asylum-seekers were assembled on the pretext that they were to be informed of the results of their asylum claims and as well as being given food. They were then driven across the border to Rwanda, where they arrived the following morning (UNHCR, 2010). Two refugees died after jumping off the truck. This incident confirmed the fears shared by the refugees that Rwanda is after them at all cost.

Despite joint military action by the armies of the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda in the eastern areas of the DRC, which had raised hopes of peace and stability in North and South Kivu as well as in the Province Orientale, the situation in the area remains volatile owing to the presence of various armed groups. In November 2009, inter-ethnic clashes in DRC's Equateur Province prompted more than 130,000 people to flee to the Central African Republic and to Congo. In addition, at least 70,000

persons have been forcibly displaced internally (UNHCR, 2011). The Juba Peace Talks which was meant to end the conflict between the Lords's Resistance Army and the government of Uganda failed in ending the two decade of war in Northern Uganda. As of January 2011, there were 3,868,466 displaced people in the Great Lakes Region. These are broken down as; Burundi 163,667, Uganda 992,984, Tanzania 274,626, Rwanda 74,894, and DRC with 2,362,295 (UNHCR, 2011). Despite the several attempts at resolving these conflicts in the Great Lakes Region, the future of displaced people remains bleak. This study seeks to highlight these challenges

1.2 Defining Armed Conflict

Armed conflict is defined 'as a political conflict in which armed combat involves the armed forces of at least one state (or one or more armed factions seeking to gain control of all or part of the state), and in which at least 1,000 people have been killed by the fighting during the course of the conflict. The Report also recognizes the fact that 'violence or armed combat are not necessarily guided by a political program or a set of politically motivated or defined military objectives' but rather by, 'armed band, militia, or factions engaged in criminal activity (e.g., theft, looting, extortion) in order to fund their political/military campaigns, but frequently also for the personal enrichment of the leadership and the general livelihood of the fighting forces' (Ploughshares Armed Conflict Report 2010).

Another definition by Uppsala Conflict Database² states that armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year. However, other definitions, like that by Fisas (2004), include the armed confrontation between different types of organized groups other than a government, and put the threshold at more than 100 deaths per year (Bermúdez, 2005).

1.2.1 What is Forced Migration?

Forced migration, is a general term that

² For details see http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/ucdp/definitions/definition_of_armed_conflict/

refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people (those displaced by conflicts) as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine, or development projects. In this regard FMO focuses on three separate, although sometimes simultaneous and inter-related, types of forced migration. These three types are categorized according to their causal factors: conflict, development policies and projects, and disasters. For the purpose of this paper, the author will focus on those displaced by armed conflict. By definition, Conflict-Induced displacement are those people who are forced to flee their homes for one or more of the following reasons and where the state authorities are unable or unwilling to protect them: armed conflict including civil war; generalized violence; and persecution on the grounds of nationality, race, religion, political opinion or social group (Oxford Department of International Development (ODID) Refugee Studies Centre, 2010).

According to UNHCR(2007), population of concern are composed of various groups of people including refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs) protected/assisted by UNHCR, stateless persons and as well as returnees (returned refugees and IDPs). The 2007 refugee population category also includes people in a refugee-like situation, most of who were previously included in the 'Others' of concern group. This sub-category is descriptive in nature and includes groups of persons who are outside their country or territory of origin and who face protection risks similar to those of refugees, but for whom refugee status has, for practical or other reasons, not been ascertained (UNHCR, 2007). This paper will not dwell on the 'returnees' (returned refugees and IDPs) as it falls outside its scope of analysis. Instead the main focus will be on those who have been forced to migrate out of their homes as a result of armed conflict.

UNHCR defines asylum-seekers are persons who have applied for asylum or refugee status, but who have not yet received a final decision on their application. While IDPs are defined as people or groups of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural- or

human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border. For purposes of UNHCR's statistics, this population only includes conflict-generated IDPs to whom the Office extends protection and/or assistance, which is the contextual scope of this paper (UNHCR, 2007).

Problem Statement

2. Understanding the nexus between armed conflicts, actors and forced migration in the Great Lakes Region

In many ways, the conflicts now being experienced in many parts of Africa are influenced by problems rooted in the past. The militarization of societies and the social tensions which these create often linger long after violence subsides, having long-term effects on opportunities for development and improving human well-being. During the 1960s and 1970s, many countries achieved political independence from direct colonial control. However in several countries, particularly in Southern Africa, western countries continued to play a pivotal role. In several countries, the anti-colonial struggles which endured for many years had a very destructive impact on social and political life, as well as environmental resources. Indeed, current tensions in several African countries cannot be fully understood without reference to these early struggles (Cutler 2007).

The 1980s were the height of the Cold War, and this had an undeniably strong influence on events across Africa. During the 1990s conflict in Angola was increasingly determined by struggles for diamonds, oil and other resources. This is part of a wider trend in Africa and elsewhere, in which the struggle for access and control of high value natural resources has resulted in, or perpetuated, conflicts. With the end of the Cold War and the loss of external funding from superpower rivalries control over these resources have become much more important to insurgents. Arvind and Vines (2004), for example, found that UNITA financed its war largely through taxes on the illicit trade in diamonds, particularly between the mid-1990s and 2002. In Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) financed its war by trading in illicit diamonds. In the DRC, struggles over the control of gold, coltan, and timber has prolonged civil war (Cutler, 2007).

Cutler (2007) asserts that the root causes of conflict in Africa have been the subject of much

debate. Unfortunately, the nature of violence has been poorly understood. The sources of conflict in Africa reflect the diversity and complexity of Africa's past and present. Some sources are purely internal, some reflect the dynamics of a particular sub-region, and some have important international dimensions. Despite these differences the sources of conflict in Africa are linked by a number of common themes and experiences. The Commission on Human Security (2003), identified six causes of internal conflict include: Competition over land and resources, Sudden and deep political or economic transitions; Growing inequity among people and communities; Increasing crime, corruption and illegal activities; Weak and unstable political regimes and institutions; and Identity politics and historical legacies, such as colonialism (Commission on Human Security 2003). Most of these can be applied to the conflicts in the Great Lakes region of Africa.

In several places, economic motivations have been a critical factor: The international arms trade is very high on the list of those who profit from conflicts in Africa, and the protagonists themselves. In DRC for example, the control and exploitation of gold, coltan, timber and other raw materials are one of the principal objectives of the warring factions. Control over those resources finance the various factions and gave them the means to sustain the conflict (Cutler 2007).

2.1 Evolution of armed conflicts and forced migration in Burundi

In the 19th century the territory that was to become the states of Rwanda and Burundi fell under the colonial control of first Germany and then Belgium. The people that populated these areas were linguistically and culturally homogenous, but were still separated into three groups; the Hutu, the Tutsi and the Twa. The Hutu and the Tutsi were to some extent different in physical appearance, but the prevalent societal order was more one of social class than race, allowing Hutus to become Tutsis through social advancement. The German and -primarily- the Belgian colonialists capitalised on these existing societal divides, in essence exacerbating them through supporting centralised Tutsi rule as the means of colonial administration. Just as in Rwanda the Hutu group in Burundi constituted the majority of the population (approximately 85-90%), whilst the Tutsi were in a minority (approximately 10-14%).

However, whilst the Hutu seized power in Rwanda at independence, power in Burundi became dominated by the Tutsi minority (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). With a population of 8.5 million (UN, 2010), Burundi gained independence in 1962 and became a monarchy under the Tutsi king Mwami Mwambutsa IV. Power in the state was linked to Union pour le Progrès National, Union for National Progress (UPRONA), a party connected to the Tutsi monarchy. Tutsi predominance within the state apparatus was violently challenged in an intrastate conflict in 1965 by a Hutu military rebellion which was quashed by the regime. Harsh retaliation from the army against the Hutu population and a cleansing of the army followed. Military regimes subsequently held power from 1966 to 1993 with dictators violently suppressing dissent, most notably in large-scale massacres of Hutus throughout the 1970s and 1980s. After the assassination of Hutu Prime Minister Pierre Ngendandumwe in January 1965, a failed Hutu uprising led to an army coup and to the abolition of the monarchy. The new hard-line military regime led by Tutsi extremists later organized a massacre of over 100,000 Hutus in 1972, causing the flight of several hundred thousand survivors to Tanzania (UNHCR, 2000).

The military regimes attempted to maintain the structure of power and privilege in Burundi and all through their reign almost all positions of importance were held by the Tutsi minority. Also, in order to suppress ethnically based dissent the Tutsi regimes denied the existence of separate ethnic groups in Burundi, making the entire subject taboo (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). This has been replicated in Rwanda by the Tutsi dominated government of Paul Kagame. In 1990 Burundi embarked on a process of democratization. As political liberalization began an intrastate conflict erupted, with the Parti pour la libération du peuple Hutu, Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People (PALIPEHUTU) challenging the government in 1991 and 1992. The democratization process culminated in elections in 1993, and Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, of the Front démocratique de Burundi, Burundian Democratic Front (FRODEBU) became president. Only months after his victory he was killed by members of the Tutsi-dominated army and violence quickly engulfed the country. Thousands of Tutsi were killed by

FRODEBU activists, whilst the army retaliated with equal force against Hutus. An UPRONA and FRODEBU power-sharing government failed to settle the crisis and in 1994 the conflict reignited, pitting the Tutsi-dominated government against a number of Hutu-based opposition groups, most notably the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie, National Council for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD) and the Parti pour la libération du peuple Hutu-Forces nationales de libération, Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People-Forces for National Liberation (PALIPEHUTU-FNL) (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008).

The current phase of the conflict began in 1988 when 20,000 or more Hutus were massacred by the military following an uprising in northern Burundi. The continued violence led the African Union to mandate the creation of a peacekeeping force to Burundi. By October 2003, 2,535 peacekeepers had been deployed to Burundi and in 2004 the AU mission was replaced by a 5,000 troop UN peacekeeping force. Armed youth groups of political parties remain a threat to stability, as well as the potential for a split among the FNL) (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). The conflict raged between 1994 and 2008, when the last remaining rebel faction agreed to enter the peace process. Elections in 2005 ushered in the CNDD-FDD's Nkúrúnziza as president of a government based on ethnic power sharing (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). According to International Crisis Group, (1999), there has been a considerable Burundian refugee population, almost entirely Hutu, in countries neighboring Burundi, and especially Tanzania, since the 1972 mass slaughter of Hutus when 300,000 were reported to have fled. Several smaller periodic outflows of refugees, in 1965, 1969, 1988 and 1991, augmented the 1972 numbers.

Though roughly 40,000 refugees were repatriated to Burundi in anticipation of the 1993 elections, nearly 240,000 stayed behind. There was another mass exodus of over 400,000 Hutu refugees following the October 1993 crisis. While a large number of refugees subsequently returned, a steady outflow of refugees predominantly from the south continued up to late 2000. By 1999 the refugees in Tanzania were about 470,000, which represented more than 7% of the Burundi population then (International Crisis Group, 1999)

2.2 Evolution of armed conflicts and forced migration in Rwanda

Rwanda became an independent state in 1962 and has a total population 10.2 million (UN, 2010). The displacement which took place in the Great Lakes region during the 1960s is of particular significance in view of the crisis which unfolded there some 30 years later. The independence of the Belgian-administered trusteeship territory of Rwanda was accompanied by widespread bloodletting and a full-blown international crisis. In the 1960s, as in the 1990s, the epicenter of the political violence that spawned refugee movements throughout the region was Rwanda (Lemarchand, 1994, Prunier, 1995, Meeren, 1996, UNHCR, 2000).

The root causes of ethnic violence in both Rwanda and Burundi can be found in the extent to which communal identities were activated, mythologized and manipulated for political advantage by international and local actors. The origins of the 1994 genocide of some 800,000 Rwandan Tutsi go back many years. Colonial rule had rigidified and polarized the two main communities in many ways. Belgian authorities had simplified the complex local system of chiefdoms, giving the Tutsi almost total control over the Hutu peasantry. As pressure from the United Nations grew in the 1950s to accelerate moves towards independence, the Belgian authorities abruptly shifted their long-held support for the Tutsi minority to the Hutu majority. This prompted rioting in November 1959 and the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy. In January 1961, a Belgian-supported *coup d'état* proclaimed what in effect was a Hutu republic. Tutsi were displaced from entrenched political positions and, as a result, the first large displacement of around 120,000 Tutsi into neighboring countries took place (UNHCR, 2000).

Nevertheless, the refugees expected they could return *en masse* in July 1962 when Rwanda attained independence as the Belgians withdrew. Many of the refugees, however, saw return as only possible if Tutsi political hegemony and the monarchy were restored. Repatriation, for most, was only to come three decades later. The failure to address the problems of the Rwandan refugees in the 1960s contributed substantially to the cataclysmic violence of the 1990s. By this time, some 150,000

Rwandan refugees had taken refuge in neighboring countries. In addition to the 40,000 in Burundi, there were some 60,000 in the Kivu in eastern DRC, 35,000 in Uganda and 15,000 in Tanganyika (UNHCR, 2000). In the short term, it was the refugees in Burundi who had the most marked political impact. As a result of the influx of the Rwandan Tutsi refugees, the Burundian Tutsi became hardened in their resolve to maintain control of the political system. Above all, they kept tight control of the army. Rwandan refugees wanted a restoration of the former regime in their country. Armed elements among the Rwandan refugees, who were for the most part in two camps close to the Rwandan border, carried out raids into Rwanda itself. These armed groups, known as *inyenzi* (the cockroaches), had the effect of hardening anti-Tutsi sentiment within Rwanda and confirming the Hutu ethnic mythology. Tutsi remaining in Rwanda were frequently the subject of murderous attacks. This was especially the case after the *inyenzi* organized what amounted to an invasion of Rwanda in December 1963. The attempt failed within days. In its aftermath, at least 10,000 Tutsi were killed and a new exodus of Tutsi refugees took place: some 7,500 left for Uganda and another 10,000 for Burundi (UNHCR, 2000).

Small groups of exiled Tutsis began attacking the Hutu-dominated government to regain government power in the 1960s, but it was not until 1990 that a more potent threat to the government of Rwanda appeared in the form of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which invaded the country from Uganda. This was the advent of an intra-state conflict of which the first phase ended in 1994 when the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) overthrew the Hutu-dominated government. The conflict did however not end there, since the remnants of the Hutu government and the Armed Forces of Rwanda (FAR) were attacked by the RPF government as they organised an armed struggle from the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), crossing the border into Rwanda. So what is the implication of all these? It is very evident that irrespective of how long it will take, the Hutus who fled from Rwanda will force their way back to Rwanda triggering another major conflict which will lead to displacement and death.

During a few months in 1994 the government of Rwanda, the armed forces of Rwanda and the

Interahamwe militia perpetrated mass-killings of ethnic Tutsis throughout Rwanda. Some two million Hutus fled to DRC. They included some of those responsible for the massacres, and some joined Zairean forces to attack local Tutsis. Rwanda responded by invading refugee camps dominated by Hutu militiamen. Up to date, these Hutu extremists are based in DRC. In the years before the genocide the government of Rwanda had also killed many civilians of Tutsi origin, as did the RPF government after it seized power in 1994 but then targeting Hutus (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). A UN report accused Rwanda of committing 'genocide' against the Hutus in DRC, allegation which Rwanda described as 'rubbish'. Rwanda supported rebel groups that opposed the government of the DRC; primarily in order to wipe out Hutu rebel groups that operated from the eastern regions of the country (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). Rwanda has also been accused of supporting Tutsi led rebels of General Laurent Nkunda who operates from eastern DRC.

2.3 What is unique with Tanzania?

Unlike most her neighbors, Tanzania has never had a full scale internal conflict nor interstate involvement apart from defending its territory from Idi Amin's invasion in 1978. It has also never harboured or supported directly any rebel group fighting against any government in the region. Instead; it has been host to thousands of refugees from the neighbouring countries in the region. Tanzania has enjoyed stability. Multi-party politics was introduced in 1992 and the system is working fairly well. Modern-day Tanzania was created through the merger of the mainland Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar in 1964. Mainland Tanganyika achieved independence from the British in 1961, whilst Zanzibar in 1963. With a population of 45 million (UN, 2010), and many ethnic groups, Tanzania has been spared the internal strife that has blighted many African states.

The campaign for independence from the British was, in Tanganyika, led by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) movement whose leader Julius Nyerere, became the first Prime Minister of independent Tanganyika. Zanzibar's independence was granted in the form of a constitutional monarchy, being ruled by an elected government and a Sultan of Arab descent. This

constitutional order was however overthrown in early 1964 by Abeid Karume's Afro-Shirazi Party, (ASP) which drew support from the poorer African classes to create dissent against the richer Arabs. Most of the Arab population was subsequently expelled from Zanzibar following this takeover. In April 1964 Zanzibar entered into a union with Tanganyika, creating the state of Tanzania (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008).

Nyerere instituted a rule of one-party socialism in the new state of Tanzania, which was however relatively benign when compared with other contemporary autocratic rulers in Africa. His ambitious socialist project for agricultural and industrial development brought improvements in health care and education, but also caused harsh economic difficulties, with the country becoming more and more reliant on foreign aid throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Nyerere passed on control of the country to Ali Hassan Mwinyi in 1985 and Tanzania abandoned one-party rule in the mid-1990s (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008).

The political union between Zanzibar and mainland Tanzania has weathered more than four decades of change. Zanzibar has its own parliament and president (BBC, 2010). Perhaps the neighbours have a lot to learn from Tanzania, something which most have failed to live to. The United Republic of Tanzania demonstrated its commitment to ending the refugee situation in the country by taking the unprecedented decision to naturalize more than 162,200 Burundian refugees. These refugees had lived in north-western Tanzania's Old Settlements since 1972, although they are not yet able to exercise all their rights as citizens. There are some 38,000 Burundian refugees still living in Mtabila Camp, Tanzania (UNHCR, 2011).

2.4 The situation of armed conflicts and forced displacement in Uganda

Uganda gained independence from Britain in 1962. However, the new state did not enjoy the fruits of independence, but soon became trapped in a pattern of leadership manipulation of ethnic and religious differences. To some extent this was a product of colonial times, which had seen the diversity of the country's people being used to divide and rule. When the country became independent the societal cleavages were deep and national unity absent (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). It has a population of 33.8 million (UN, 2010). Between

1962 and 1971 Milton Obote from the northern Langi ethnic group, ruled Uganda. During his reign the national armed forces were dominated by soldiers from northern Uganda. In 1971 Obote was ousted in a coup led by his chief of the armed forces, Idi Amin. To consolidate his power, Amin changed the ethnic balance of the military, recruiting heavily from the West Nile region, his home area. The army ranks were filled with Nubians in general and Amin's own Kakwa tribe in particular. Large numbers of Acholi and Langi soldiers were massacred, many were presumed to be supporters of the deposed Obote (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008).

While the country had seen an increasing resistance to Amin's rule and an attempt had been made to topple him in a military coup in 1974, it was not until 1979 that he was finally ousted from power. Amin tried to annex the Kagera basin to Uganda an act which prompted Tanzania to join numerous Ugandan opposition movements in launching an intrastate conflict. In March 1979, the anti-Amin Ugandan forces joined together and formed Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA). A month later UNLA troops together with its Tanzanian supporters seized power in Kampala. In 1980, after some politically tumultuous months, an election was held that brought Obote back to power. However, some of the groups that had joined UNLA in 1979 did not accept the results of the elections. Notably Yoweri Museveni, and what would become the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) left the political scene in 1981 for guerrilla warfare and was soon joined by other groups (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). Obote's second period in power was mainly characterised by the conflict fought with the numerous rebel groups. The ethnic balance in the armed forces was yet again changed as UNLA's many Acholi and Langi were hastily enrolled with minimal training and little sense of discipline. Furthermore, gross human rights abuses were committed in the Luwero district, where Museveni's NRM had a big following and thousands of civilians were allegedly killed (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). Many people were displaced as well.

In 1985 Obote was deposed once more, this time by a faction of the armed forces, led by General Tito Okello. Okello ruled for six months until he was deposed by the NRM in 1986. Museveni became president and remained in power well to date.

However, his reign was not unchallenged. Fearing reprisals for the killings allegedly conducted in the Luwero region and elsewhere, remnants of Obote's former army launched an intrastate conflict under the banner of Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). Eventually a number of other northern rebel groups emerged, of which the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is the most long-lived. Museveni's government also faced armed resistance in the east, in the west and in the north-west (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008).

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, and was formed in 1987 after the defeat of a rebellion by the Holy Spirit Movement, led by Alice Lakwena. The LRA is notorious for atrocities against civilians and for the forced conscription of tens of thousands of children into its forces. Initially, different rebel groups had the support of the northern Acholi and Lango tribes who felt marginalized by the government but the abuses, especially by the LRA against local people weakened this support. The LRA lacks any real political goals, its main stated objective being to govern the country according to its interpretation of the Ten Commandments (Ogwang, 2006, Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report, 2010).

However, the LRA has since distanced itself from some of the killings allegedly committed by them, accusing the government of the killings instead. The conflict led to the internal displacement of over 1.8 million people during its peak. In 1997, another rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), became active in western Uganda. The ADF, which includes some ex-commanders of Idi Amin's army, appears to be driven by an ideology based on Islam. For several years the ADF were able to launch attacks from bases in Democratic Republic of the Congo due to the lawless nature of the eastern DRC. However, the Ugandan government overran the ADF headquarters on the DRC border in 2001 and, with the resolution of the war in the DRC since, cross-border raids are no longer as easily executed. A third group, the West Nile Bank Front (WNBF), dominated by tribes from the West Nile region that make up the bulk of the army of former Ugandan dictator Idi Amin. The goal of WNBF leaders was to regain power lost when Amin was ousted in 1979 (Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report, 2010). This conflict ended when they reached peace agreement with the government.

Apart from the internal conflicts plaguing the country, Uganda has also been deeply involved in many of the conflicts in the surrounding region, although the involvement has in most cases concerned support such as arms supplies. However, in the conflict in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Museveni sent troops first in aid of the rebel group who eventually toppled the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, and later in aid of rebels fighting the new regime of Laurent Kabila (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). While in DRC, the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) fought three times with the Rwanda Patriotic Front. Since then the two neighbors have publicly accused each other of harboring each other's rebels in their territory. Uganda also supported the RPF in the early 1990s which led to the overthrow of the Habyarimana and the subsequent genocide in Rwanda in 1994. By the end of June, 2007, 916, 000 remained in IDP and refugee camps, many in the Acholi sub-region; 539, 000 returned to their villages; 381, 000 moved to transit settlements near their villages. Despite progress in early 2008 and personal claims of desiring peace, Kony continued to refuse signing a Final Peace Agreement until the removal of ICC warrants. The militaries of Uganda, DRC and Southern Sudan eventually responded with a joint military offensive in late 2008 with little progress. The LRA reacted by terrorizing villages of the Central African Republic, DRC, and Southern Sudan. This renewed violence, as well as the proliferation of arms in Northern Uganda, is an enormous obstacle to the resettlement of internally displaced persons. The LRA has a long history of effective guerrilla warfare, and the efficacy of renewed military operations is questionable (Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report, 2010)

2.5 The Historical Perspectives of conflicts and displacement in Democratic Republic of Congo

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) won its independence from Belgium on 30 June 1960. The country has however continued to carry the burden of the Legacy of King Leopold II with a high level of violence and continuing human rights violations. Since independence the country has been torn by intrastate conflicts on five occasions. Straight after independence two provinces of the Congo, Katanga and South Kasai, declared themselves sovereign and an intrastate conflict followed that ended in 1962 when UN peacekeeping forces

managed to regain control over the territories (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). These conflicts owe their roots to the death of the first elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba who was killed by Mobutu's army with the help of United States of America and the Belgians due to his socialist orientation in 1961 (Hollington, 2007). With a total Population of 67 million (UN, 2010), DRC hosts the largest UN peacekeeping mission in Africa.

When Congo's parliament was dissolved in 1963, the foundation for a new rebellion was laid. In 1964-1965 the Conseil national de libération, National Liberation Council (CNL) or the Simbas fought in the eastern parts of the country to remove the government. In September 1964 the rebels controlled almost half of the country and proclaimed a revolutionary government in Stanleyville. In January-June 1965, the rebels lost almost all territory they previously held. In 1967 militias again tried to overthrow the government from bases inside Rwanda (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). In March 1977, the Front de libération nationale congolais, Congolese National Liberation Front (FLNC) launched a military campaign from Angola with the objective of toppling the regime of President Mobutu. The rebel group managed to take control over some territory in Shaba (Katanga). After asking for outside support, FNLC was, however, pushed back into Angola in May. The insurgency recurred in 1978. At that point the USA airlifted French and Belgian forces into DRC with the supposed mission to protect the 'white population', but these troops forced the FLNC out of the country (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008).

After staying in power for three decades his western backers thought he was overdue and irrelevant as far as their 'national interests' were concerned. In 1996-1997 an armed rebellion led by Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo, Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) and supported by Rwanda and Uganda managed to topple Mobutu in May 1997. However the new regime was soon at war again, this time against Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie, Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), Mouvement de libération congolais, Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) and Mouvement de libération (RCD), Liberation Movement (RCD), (RCD-ML). After years of negotiations the parties concluded a

peace agreement in 2003, and in 2006 the first 'democratic' elections in more than 40 years were held (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2008). As these conflicts break out millions of people are displaced and thousands are killed. According to popular Congolese perception, the recurrent wars in North Kivu from 1962 to the present all have their origins in cross-border identity allegiances, specifically of the 'foreign' Banyarwanda and the Congolese Tutsis who are often described as 'Rwandans'. The two invasions by the Rwandan army in 1996 and 1998 further strengthened this sentiment (Lange, 2010).

Following the influx of Rwandan Hutu militia to North Kivu after the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the previously relatively localized ethnic tensions in North Kivu boiled over, leading to mass displacement of Banyarwanda (Hutu and Tutsi alike). Congolese Tutsi fled mostly to Rwanda whereas the majority of the Congolese Hutu fled to Uganda. In 1993 some 7,000 people were reportedly killed in extreme fighting, followed by several hundreds more deaths in 1994 and 1995. The ethnic mix of the region changed in 1994 when, after the victory of the Tutsi-led Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) over the Rwandese army, more than a million Hutu refugees fled neighbouring Rwanda for eastern DR Congo out of fear of retribution for the genocide that had taken place earlier in the year (Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report, 2010).

In September 1996, the deputy governor of South Kivu province issued an ultimatum to the Banyamulenge -- a Tutsi ethnic group opposed to then President Mobutu Sese Seko to leave the region. In response, the Banyamulenge began an active rebellion against the Hutu militias and Congolese forces in the Kivu area, which grew into a larger insurrection as several rebel groups joined to overthrow the Mobutu regime. The resulting coalition group, the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADFL), took as its leader, Laurent Kabila, who, after the fall of the Mobutu regime to the rebels in May 1997, became president of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Accusing Kabila of 'corruption, nepotism, and failure to bring about democratic reforms, ethnic harmony and regional stability', the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD), a coalition of rebel groups, was formed in 1998 to depose Kabila. The RCD, which

included the Banyamulenge, members of the national opposition, and a few former government leaders, was rooted in unresolved tensions and ethnic differences among anti-Mobutu groups which surfaced after Mobutu was gone. The conflict took on a regional dimension when neighbouring states-Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia all deployed troops to the DRC in support of Laurent and later Joseph Kabila, while Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi deployed troops against the Kinshasa government. Following the assassination of Kabila in January 2001, his son Joseph Kabila became President (Carayannis, 2009, Ploughshares Armed Conflicts Report, 2010).

There are four ongoing conflicts in DRC some of which are very violent while others are seasonal. These include Enyele rebels in Equateur decades-old conflict over fishing rights has evolved into ethnic tussle for economic and political power in north-west. Some 200,000 refugees have fled violence since 2009 as a result of this conflict. The Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which has been fighting the Ugandan government since 1987 remain active Ugandan in north-east DRC and in neighboring countries, like Central African Republic and Southern Sudan. The presence of Rwandan rebels; the Hutu and Tutsi rebel militia operate in North and South Kivu which has led to massive displacement in and across the region (BBC, 2011). Coup attempts and sporadic violence heralded renewed fighting in the eastern part of the country in 2008. Rwandan Hutu militias clashed with government forces in April 2010, displacing thousands of civilians. Another militia rebel group under General Laurent Nkunda, a Congolese Tutsi was seen as Rwanda's main ally in the area. However, he has since been 'arrested' by Rwanda after some disagreement with Kigali. His arrest has not ended violence in eastern DRC (BBC, 2011).

3. What Are the Socio-Economic and Political Impact of Armed Conflicts and Forced Migration in the Region?

Generally the impact of armed conflict cannot be measured in all aspects. However there are some indicators which can help to gauge the costs both in the short and long term. Conflicts, and post-conflict situations, places stress on the environment, sometimes contributing to the overexploitation of natural resources. Environmental resources have been

acknowledged as a factor in influencing or prolonging some conflicts in Africa, a good example is DRC. Despite being one of the richest regions, in terms of both human and natural resources, extreme poverty and hunger abound in the region. Armed conflict has – along with large populations of displaced people and refugees and the HIV/AIDS pandemic – been identified as a major factor in slowing down the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The resources spent on warfare could, if redirected, make a significant contribution to addressing the MDGs and other development targets. Often, food production is drastically affected by armed conflict. According to some studies, areas affected by conflict suffer annual losses of more than 12 percent of production, although the figure varies widely from country to country (Cutler 2007). Most of these victims survive on hand outs from the World Food Organisation as well as other humanitarian organizations

The displacement of people is a major social and economic cost of armed conflict, in the short term as well as in post-conflict periods. Typically, the casualties of modern armed conflicts are civilians. Because conflicts often take on ethnic overtones, and because modern African conflicts generally involve militias and guerrillas rather than regular troops, it is all too easy for civilians to be targeted just because they share the same ethnic or cultural identity as an enemy group (Saundry 2008). As a result of the targeting of civilians, large areas can become depopulated and output of agricultural or pastoral production reduced, thus affecting local livelihoods and the national economy. Northern Uganda, where almost 2 million people were displaced on a regular basis, is a case in point. One major, and often lingering effect of such violence, is damage to the social fabric, including informal networks of trust and support, undermining governance and often natural resource management (NRM). This hinders the resurgence of institutions, including markets and NRM institutions, in the post-conflict period (Saundry 2008). The next conflict to break out in northern Uganda will most likely be related to land ownership since the return of many people has created a sense of land rights and ownership leading to struggles among the returnees. For the case of northern Uganda, there have been reported cases of land related deaths among the returnees some of whom are claiming ownership on

the same land.

One of the main issues today is the ever-increasing number of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) on the continent and its negative impact on the social, economic, political and human development (Rwamatwara, 2005). The most obvious consequence of this climate of conflict is the insecurity in the region. For example in October 2010, there were still 1.5 million displaced persons in eastern DRC, and new groups of people were fleeing their homes following a number of attacks, accompanied by rape, especially in Walikale territory. The human development indicators are extreme in Kivu and DRC in general. Poverty rates (84.7% in South Kivu and 73% in North Kivu) are higher than the national average (71.3%). School attendance rates are very low in primary schools (about 53%), and maternal and infant mortality rates are high. Health services are inadequate, with one doctor per 27,700 inhabitants in South Kivu, one per 24,000 inhabitants in North Kivu (Jacquemot, 2010).

The effects of internal conflicts are felt at various spatial levels, within the immediate area of conflict, and often in neighboring countries. Conflicts may undercut or destroy environmental, physical, human and social capital, diminishing available opportunities for sustainable development (Saundry 2008). Conflicts impacts on human well-being, reducing the quality of life, the capabilities of people to live the kinds of lives they value, and the real choices they have. It results in the loss of lives, livelihoods and opportunity, as well as of human dignity and fundamental human rights.

Livelihoods are directly affected through decreased access to land, and inadequate access to natural resources, as a result of exclusion, displacement and the loss of biodiversity. Conflicts can set in motion a cycle of degradation and human vulnerability. Human vulnerability refers not only to the exposure to negative environmental change, but also to the ability to cope with such change through either adaptation or mitigation. Conflicts contribute to the breakdown of social cohesion and the disruption of local governance systems; this in turn may result in established safety nets becoming unavailable. The increase in social and economic vulnerability, as result of conflict, may in the face of environmental and land degradation, trigger new

tensions and conflict over critical resources, such as water or food (Saundry 2008).

The incidence of poverty may increase, not only through the loss of livelihoods but also as a result of a growing inability of people to cope with change. This loss of resilience is also directly linked to diminished access to public services, resulting in, for example, an increasing incidence of ill health, a contraction in formal employment opportunities, the destruction of subsistence livelihoods, and other entitlements failures which affect consumption and nutrition, as well as the weakening of social cohesion and heightening insecurity. The use of landmines, for example, has severely limited access to land, both during the conflict and in the long term. Conflicts are estimated to result, on average, in production losses of 12 percent and to undercut growth in the agricultural sector by 3 percent per year. War, therefore, by increasing the gap between food production and need, aggravates poverty and hunger, and consequently promotes continued dependence on food aid (Saundry 2008). This has been the case in northern Uganda, DRC, and Burundi.

The full impacts of landmines on human well-being and livelihoods, and ecosystems are too costly. These costs cannot be measured in only economic terms; landmines are designed to maim, and the resulting bodily harm, which can have severe psychological impacts on those affected. Landmines are cheap to use but extremely expensive to decommission. A single mine can often be bought on the black market for US\$3, but may cost anything between US\$200-1,000 to remove, depending on where it is placed (Saundry 2008)

The destruction and decay of infrastructure not only affects the provision of essential services but leads to a breakdown in communication, through the loss of roads and telecommunications. This may increase the extent of isolation already experienced by rural communities; it may further diminish their sense of citizenship and contribute to a shrinking of civil society. Infrastructural decay results in the loss of market and other economic opportunities. The Department for International Development (DfID) reports that in the 20 years from 1980 to 2000, Africa lost over 50 percent of its infrastructure as a result of conflict (Saundry 2008). This is evident in Rwanda, DRC, Burundi, and northern Uganda.

Children are a major target of conflicts and violence. In a significant number of conflicts, including in Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Angola and Mozambique there has been the forced recruitment of child soldiers through, among other things, abductions. In 2001, there were estimated to be 200,000 child soldiers in Africa. Children may be killed or maimed by one group in order to undermine the morale of the other side. As a result of violent conflict, there has also been an increase in the numbers of street children (UN, 1999). Throughout the conflict in northern Uganda, LRA leader Joseph Kony created his army primarily through the violent abduction of children. An estimated 30,000 to 66,000 children have been kidnapped over the course of war (World Vision, 2010). Some of these children have since escaped, surrendered or killed. The future of these children remains bleak. Displacements of people also have direct impacts on receiving communities and countries. The burden placed on local infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and sanitation facilities may be considerable and difficult to bear.

Conflicts also have macro-level impacts. These include a decline in state capacity, associated with a shrinking revenue base and reduced public spending, and economic stagnation as a result of a fall in exports, hyper-inflation, exchange rate depreciation, disinvestment, and capital flight (Saundry 2008). This was the case in Uganda between 1971-79 when Amin declared what he called 'economic war' on Asians and ordered them to leave the country within 90 days. The economic impacts, however, are seldom confined to the country of conflict. Countries bordering conflict zones may need to increase security expenditure in military and non-military sectors, although this has been used as an excuse by many countries in the region to increase military expenditures. Additionally, they may incur new costs in relation to refugees and losses from deteriorating regional trade (Saundry 2008).

A further feature of conflicts is the collapse of public institutions or the inability of these institutions to cope. Conflicts can lead to large areas coming under the control of non-state actors like in eastern Congo which encourages illegal and unsustainable trade in natural resources. Natural resources in these zones may be exploited at unsustainable rates in order to purchase weapons, or

simply to enrich members of the controlling forces. Foreign or multinational companies are often involved in resource exploitation in such zones, for example timber and other mineral resources in eastern DRC have attracted many multinational corporations which benefit from such chaos (Saundry 2008).

It is very evident that refugees flow from one African country to another takes place in an uncontrolled manner during armed conflicts. In some cases the flow of refugees is too huge and fast to be adequately managed. For example, the influx of Rwandese refugees was at the rate of 250,000 refugees crossing into Tanzania within 24 hours and in two months the number of refugees fleeing from Rwanda to Tanzania rose to nearly a million people, with a further almost two million crossing to Zaire (Rutinwa 1999, UNHCR, 2000, Rwamatwara, 2005). These mass displacements of people constitute a serious threat of security.

They affect economic, environmental and political stability of the transit and final destination countries. In fact, countries which host big numbers of refugees have complained of the latter's destruction of environment in terms of tree-cutting in search of fire wood, water pollution, deforestation for setting up camps (Mupedziswa 1993). These countries have also complained of spending considerable amounts of money over refugees which would have been used to improve the standard of living of their own citizens (Rwamatwara, 2005).

For example, Tanzania has hosted and supported several freedom fighters from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Mozambique and Namibia. It also accepted and integrated large numbers of refugees from Rwanda and Burundi. In the context of the crisis of the 1990s, however, Tanzania's refugee policies radically changed. When hundreds of thousands Hutu refugees from Rwanda poured into Tanzania, the latter closed its doors to several thousand refugees and later forcibly repatriated many Rwandan refugees on grounds that they posed a security threat (Rwamatwara, 2005). During Obote II government, many Rwandese joined the guerrilla war of Museveni because the government asked them to return to their home in Rwanda yet at 'home' they were told there was no 'space' for them. This led the refugees who were mainly Tutsi to force their way back in 1990 with the help of Museveni's

government which in turn led to another influx of mainly Hutu refugees and internal displacement.

4. Are there durable solutions to armed conflicts and forced migration in the Region?

Rwamatwara (2005) points to the fact that addressing and solving the problem of refugees in Africa requires a good analysis of its root causes so as to address them and prevent the problem before it occurs. The root cause of forced migration is armed conflicts whose causes include poverty, civil strife, arms trade, violations of human rights and lack of accountability and democracy on the part of leaders (Rutinwa 1999). The 1994 Addis Ababa Declaration points out that armed conflicts and civil strife are the principal causes of refugees' flights in Africa. The document also mentions other factors which play a significant role in forced population displacement in Africa such as ethnic and religious intolerance, the abuse of human rights on a massive scale; the monopolization of political and economic power; refusal to respect democracy or the results of free and fair elections; resistance to popular participation in governance; and poor management of public affairs (Rutinwa 1999). A closer look indicates that all these factors are evident in the Great Lakes Region.

But more importantly to note are the role of external actors. These are very powerful forces, some of which operate through the multinational corporations. Rwamatwara (2005), points to external causes as worth mentioning as well, such as arming and sponsoring rebel movements by external forces in order to have easy access to minerals and to find markets for their products, especially weapons; the unfair trade deals and unfair international economic system which leave many African states too poor to adequately attend to the needs of the citizens (Rutinwa 1999, Rwamatwara 2005). However this assertion can be challenged on the grounds that it's actually not the resources at the disposal of some of these countries but how they are used. In most cases they are squandered by the leaders.

The challenge of addressing the root causes is big which requires commitment of all stakeholders locally and globally. Some of the concrete measures to be taken include the democratization of African states in a manner that

associates every citizen in the major decisions of public administration and governance. It also includes banning and criminalizing illegal sales of weapons. The major solution is also and primarily the sustainable development which eradicates extreme poverty provides basic infrastructures and improves people's standard of living (Rwamatwara 2005). But the biggest challenge has always and will always be the political will of all the actors be it internal or external to walk the talk.

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