EXILE AND REFUGEES: AN EXPLORATION OF WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOUR: A CASE IN ZAMBIA OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO REFUGEES
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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how long-term refugees pursue livelihoods, the impact this pursuit has on the human security of conflict-affected communities, and the ways in which international assistance can help. Refugees' pursuit of livelihoods can increase human security because economic activities help to recreate social and economic interdependence within and between communities, and can restore social networks based on the exchange of labour, assets and food. When refugees are allowed to gain access to resources and freedom of movement, and can work alongside their hosts to pursue productive lives, they would be less dependent on aid and better able to overcome the sources of tension and conflict in their host communities.

The study targeted mainly Congolese, Burundian, Somali, and Rwandan refugees as well as former refugees from Rwanda and Angola in urban areas and the two rural refugee settlements, Mayukwayukwa (Kaoma District/Western Province) and Meheba (Kalumbila District/North-Western Province).
The economic activities of refugees and former refugees range from farming, running small businesses such as trading shops, artisans, animal husbandry to providing services through formal and informal employment. The refugees and former refugees are also employing Zambians – especially in urban areas.

INTRODUCTION

The refugee issue is as complex as its causes, solutions and effects. It is important to note that the primary victims of the refugee problem are always individuals. Nonetheless, it also manifests itself in various forms on the societal, governmental and international levels. Obviously, it is a clear humanitarian, moral and development issue facing humanity. Indeed, its scope is wide enough to have significant bearing on security, environmental and natural resources concerns

(Hakovirta, 1988). However, a casual look back into history tells us that the refugee movement is not a recent phenomenon.

For instance, the Israelites were made refugees on several lands as they moved from Egypt to the Promised Land. Similarly, the world media in headlines had with great zeal shown the terrible pictures of persons moving away from their homes to presumably, places of safety. Central America, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia are apt illustrations as people labor daily to escape the depressing effects of war and natural disasters. Understandably, no part of the world today is immune to a refugee situation (Earl E. et al, 1983).

The world refugee problem is caused by a variety of reasons; factors and forces. These include massive violations of human rights, especially the practice of colonialism, direct and structural violence, war, internal conflicts, external aggression, ethnic and religious strife, direct political persecution and economic and national disasters. Nevertheless, most refugee movements today are caused by conflict. And contemporary conflicts are mostly of an internal, inter-communal nature (Gil, 1992).

The massive changes and instability generated by the end of the Cold War triggered new mass movements of people across the globe. In fact the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa (Aristide et al, 1989) and most recently Iraq and Sudan, war and mass displacement of peoples are challenging the sanctity of borders and have contributed to the disintegration of nations. The magnitude of refugee flows in recent years has generated urgent global concern. In 1951, when the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established, there were some 1.5 million refugees, by 1980 there were 8.2 million (Gil Loescher, 1992:9). Religious revivalism moreover was the direct cause of several major refugee movements during the 1980s. In Sudan, for instance, the imposition of Islamic laws has alarmed southern Sudanese Christians and animists and intensified the insurgency led by the SPLA. More recently the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Somalia has complicated refugee movements (Gil 1992:15, Aristide 1992).

The majorities of mass movements, especially contemporary refugee movements in the Third World, are caused by war, ethnic strife and shape socio-economic inequalities (Gil 1992:28). Also, a large proportion of the world's displacements occur as a direct result of political and

social revolutions. During the past 40years, Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Iran, Angola, Mozambique and Nicaragua generated massive refugee outflows as a result of the revolutionary changes in their political, economic and social systems (Aristide et al 1992:10, Gil 1992:29). In the 1990s, refugee movements were mostly the result of ethnic and communal conflicts, fuelled by the increasing availability of modern weaponry and socio-economic inequalities. Although East-West conflict was a factor in the past, the underlying dynamic of many Third World conflicts has in fact been competition for political power among fiercely rival ethnic groups for example Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan (Gil 1992:31). Refugee movements are usually sudden and unplanned. Most of them left their homes immediately after either seeing people executed around their houses or when bombs or other factors caused it difficult to get food or shelter.

Europe is not an exception to the impacts of the refugee crisis; *scramble for the available jobs, shelter, national food security, border control, regional conflicts, and government policy on immigration* to name a few (Bush, K. 1989),. These can pose serious challenges if not critically and theologically reflected upon. There is *need to realize and acknowledge that God had always accompanied his people in the joys and struggles of life* (Exodus4:1-5). This reassuring presence of God, support and solidarity should be the beginning point for the church (Genesis 7-8).*The love of God even in times of crisis should reach Gods people though their situation paints a gloomy picture, they need to be loved and assured that God is still with them, there is always a way out of every situation humanity may face*.

THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT ON REFUGEES

From the Biblical account, the story of the Hebrew people show cases a story of a people in *exile, aliens resident in foreign lands, suffering oppression and persecution* (Ruth 1-4). The exodus of Gods people from Egypt was an escape from slavery. God's accompaniment revealed to the Israelites the nature of God and how He would love them to relate to him and one another.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, *God is seen as the God who cares for the exiles and persecuted refugees, God is seen to have a preferential option for the poor, oppressed and marginalized.*

In the book of Leviticus, we see Gods instruction to his people not to take advantage or mistreat exiles who lived among them but to love them and treat them like they were citizens with full rights too. The emphasis is on how they were supposed to live with them and the treatment they deserved.

> *Joshua records* the need to build cities of refuge as God had instructed Moses earlier as a way to protect the offenders. These cities were meant to cater for those offenders who accidentally had committed crime and unfortunately became foreigners and exiles in their own land. The purpose was to prevent injustice especially in cases of revenge. *A preliminary hearing would be held by the gates with Levitical judges presiding over. The gates represent access which are synonymous with our borders and the laws that define immigration matters* (Numbers 15:14-16). The cities were to be built close to the settlement areas so that those who looked for refuge could quickly find safety and abide there until the serving Priest at the time of the offence was no more, then they would return to their land.

> The church should be seen in such crisis moment as cities of refuge for displaced people. The church *should not only build but rather become that house of refuge full of love, comfort, relief aid and should further advocate for better laws nationally, regionally and internationally that are inclusive and protect the well-being of both citizens and the strangers.*

> *In the book of Matthew*, Jesus emphasizes on the acts of mercy that we do every day. They may not necessarily depend on wealth, intelligence or ability but they are simply acts freely given and freely received (Psalms 146:9). We have no excuse to neglect those who need our help nor handover all the responsibility to government to address their needs. We have a part to play, we need to advocate for better policies and conditions of the foreigners.

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a) *Would the church agree to give equal opportunities to foreigners who are aliens in their land, would the church open its arms and doors and indeed go out to refugee hotspots or centers and assure the victims that they could rely on the church*?

b) *Can the church go further to lobby government, institutions or departments and network with other interest groups for the same cause using its own resources?*

c) *How prepared is the church prepared to go while facing the reality that their land is being occupied, their food security, jobs, and service delivery being threatened?*

d) *How far can the church go or engage in this matter is the very basis of motivation to do something and even more to change the status quo.*

1. Background Information

There are many reasons why every day across the world people make the difficult decision to leave their home, families', possessions and connections with their local community and walk away to an uncertain and often frightening future elsewhere.

Refugees leave their homes and their country because they have no other choice (Bernstein, B. 1977). They are forced out by factors such as war, persecution, natural disasters, environmental crises and poverty (Betts, T. F. 1981). They may also leave because their government will not or cannot protect them from serious human rights abuses or meet their needs (Brookes, A., Sayers, V. & Ward, P. 1990). Whatever the reason, refugees leave their homes because they fear for their own life or safety, or that of their family.

Many refugees leave their homes suddenly and often times (*are able to*) take very few (if any) of their possessions with them (Andrian Martin 2005). Sometimes they face many days of travel, with little food and in fear of their lives. If they do get to safety, they then rely on the people living in the area they have fled to; these people often have few resources to share and may not welcome the new arrivals.

2. Refugees

Displaced persons are commonly known as refugees (Bakewell, O. 2000). A refugee is someone who has been forced to run away (flee) from one's own country to another due to violence or

fear of persecution. Some face persecution due to political opinion or membership in a particular social group, religion, race, nationality (Bascom Johnathan 1993). Many of these refugees are likely never to return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal and religious violence are major causes of refugees fleeing their countries. Over the years we have had over two thirds (2/3) of the population of refugees come from mainly 5 countries i.e. Afghanistan, Syria, South Sudan, Myammar and Somalia (Barth Fredrik 1994). However, the last 5 years we see Congo DR population fleeing away from their country due ethnic violence running to neighbouring countries.

3. Internally displaced person

Internally displaced person (IDP) is someone who has been forced to flee their home but never cross an international border. These individuals seek safety anywhere they can find it i.e. in nearby towns, schools, settlements, internal camps, even forests and fields (Kelley CP, Mohtadi S, Cane MA, Seager R, Kushnir Y 2015). IDPs, which include people displaced by internal strife and natural disasters, are the largest group that UNHCR assists United Nations (High Commissioner for Refugees. 2014). Unlike refugees, IDPs are not protected by international law or eligible to receive many types of aid because they are legally under the protection of their own government. Countries with some the largest internally displaced populations are Colombia, Syria, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia.

4. Types of Displacements
4.1 Economic migrants

Developing countries that host refugees for protracted periods experience long-term economic, social, political, and environmental impacts. From the moment of arrival, refugees may compete with local citizens for scarce resources such as water, food, housing, and medical services. Their presence increases the demands for education, health services, infrastructure such as water supply, sanitation, and transportation, and also in some cases, for natural resources such as grazing and firewood. The impacts of the refugee presence are both positive and negative (UNHCR, 2004). The dynamic between positive and negative factors is complex and varies depending on several factors, including the political economy of hosting countries, urban-rural interactions, and the nature of host-refugee relations. Furthermore, even when a refugee situation

creates economic opportunities for both the displaced and their hosts, there can be winners and losers in each group.

Large-scale and protracted refugee influxes can have macro-economic impacts on the host country economy. Some of these impacts are associated with increased but uncompensated public expenditures related to the care and maintenance of the refugee population. A report concerning the impact of refugees on the national public expenditure in Malawi during the 1990s concluded that significant direct and indirect expenditure related to refugees affected the scale of the government's capital investment in the social and infrastructure sectors. Direct and indirect costs of refugee influxes on public expenditure were estimated at US$ 9.4 million for 1988 and U$ 8.4 million for 1989 (Gom et al, 1990). As a result, a UNHCR emergency assistance program was developed to ensure that development projects served the needs of both the displaced and nationals in the refugee hosting areas (Zetter, 1995).

This program included a substantial expansion of hospitals, clinics, road networks, and water supply, as well as reforestation plans to alleviate the environmental degradation of fuel wood reserves. Another example of the economic impact of refugees on a host country is the case of Kosovar refugees in Albania and Macedonia. A 1999 report on Kosovo refugees prepared by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank asserts that a large influx of refugees strains the social and economic infrastructure of neighboring countries, and therefore emergency financial assistance was needed. Preliminary estimated indicated that for the six countries most affected by the Kosovo refugee crisis in 1999, the direct host country budgetary cost of humanitarian assistance ranged between US$52 - 188 million (IMF and World Bank, 1999) In the case of Albania, an emergency budget support operation was recommended; for Macedonia, it was suggested that existing operations be revamped to make them more responsive to the needs arising from the refugee presence and that official debt relief for the country be considered.

The report concluded that based on the Albanian and Macedonian experience, additional funds through quick-disbursements are essential to effectively address the economic impacts of refugee crises in hosting countries, particularly for poor countries (World Bank, 1999).

These are people who normally leave their homes and countries voluntarily to seek a better life elsewhere (UNHCR 2015). They are therefore different from refugees who flee their homes and countries because of the threat of persecution. Economic migrants can normally return home when they choose to, will not face the threat of persecution and will continue to receive the protection of their government. Refugees on the other hand are not able to return safely to their homes unless or until the situation forcing them to leave has been resolved (Bush, K. 1989). However, according to a number of reports, some of these people may in fact be environmental refugees, but because there is no international recognition of environmental refugees they end up being classified as economic migrants.

4.2 Environmental refugees

The presence of large influxes of refugees has also been associated with environmental impacts on land, water, natural resources, and slum growth. Various studies provide examples of different types of environmental impacts related to the influx of refugees and their long-term presence (Jacobsen 1997, UNHCR 1998, FAO 2005). The initial arrival phase of refugee influxes may be accompanied by severe environmental impacts when displaced people often move into and through an area to secure their immediate needs (UNHCR/FAO 1994). Some of these immediate effects include fuel wood crises and water pollution in refugee camp areas. As the emergency period passes and refugees become settled, the nature of the environmental impact changes, but can still be significant.

 A recent environmental assessment conducted in Zambia highlights that the massive presence of refugees is related to serious environmental damage in hosting areas. Environmental impacts are closely associated with the type of refugee settlements and particularly the concentration of people in large camps. ***The most evident environmental impacts include: deforestation and firewood depletion, land degradation, unsustainable groundwater extraction, and water pollution.*** In addition, human waste disposal by displaced persons can contaminate local groundwater and cause the spread of diseases (United Nations Environment Program, 2005). Other impacts from the initial and long-term displacement are related to uncontrolled slum growth.

These are a type of refugees who have been forced to leave their homes because of environmental factors (Bourgois, Philippe (1992). According to the UN charter on refugee's status, the environmental refugees are a new type of refugee. These come up as a result of the rising sea levels, desertification, soil erosion and shrinking freshwater supplies (Boserup Ester 1965). All these have been made worse by the change in climate.

The Red Cross claim that there are more people now displaced by environmental disasters than by war (Baker, J. 1995). Furthermore, some argue that the homes of these displaced people are being destroyed because of the environmental and economic policies of the governments of developed countries and that it amounts to "environmental persecution," making environmental refugees deserving of legal protection.

Environment-related migration has been most notable in USA, but also affects millions of people in Asia and India (Andrian Martin 2005). Europe and the US face increased pressure from people driven from North Africa and Latin America by deteriorating soil and water conditions. When a person has no home and no money one becomes desperate, doing anything to meet their basic needs. As a result of this, they often find themselves in risky situations that would be frightening, even for adults.

4.3 Globalisation

All of us know, or know of, at least one person that has packed up and moved to a different country. Globalization is opening borders that have never been open to many of us before and more and more people are moving abroad. (Andrian Martin 2005).But what are the real reasons for immigrating? Have a read to better understand the decisions made by your friends and perhaps even to help make this life changing decision yourself.

4.4 Finances and cost of living

The Zambia Initiative (ZI). In 2002 the Zambian government raised several important concerns related to security, infrastructure, environmental and service delivery challenges in western Zambia. Development needs in this area were aggravated as a result of the prolonged presence of more than 100,000 Angolan refugees, some self settled and others living in camps. The ZI launched in 2003 was designed as a multi-sector rural development program that targeted refugees and their host communities. The main objective of the program was to reduce poverty in areas affected by forced displacement through community-based development projects. Development interventions included various sectors such as education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, forestry, and water resources. An evaluation of the ZI deemed its approach a good practice in supporting constructive roles of refugees in local economies and identifying win-win situations where the burden of governments hosting refugees can be turned into opportunities (UNHCR, 2006).

A lot of people want to make a change to a new country because of the cost of living in their own country, or the lifestyle that they'll be able to afford in a different country (Werker Eric (2007). Some people find themselves in poverty of facing serious economic hardships in their own country and immigrating will offer them a solution. They seek financial stability. Some cases aren't as serious, and people simply feel that they will be able to offer their families a better life in a new country (Whitaker B. Elise 1999). A lot of the time, people in developing countries want to move to an already developed country for a better lifestyle.

4.5 Services

Some people decide to make the move abroad based on the services offered either in their home country or in a different country (Roland P. Falkner 1910). Service delivery is a big problem in the developing world, and this is generally a much smaller problem (if a problem at all) in developed countries. People want to get away from a country where the waste doesn't get removed regularly or the sewerage system isn't in proper working order (Preston Rosemary 1985). This leaves the streets dirty and causes health problems to their families. The country to which they're immigrating to will most likely offer better services and therefore be much cleaner, and healthier, to live in.

4.6 Weather

A big factor for immigrating is weather conditions. People either want to escape the weather of their own country or move to a place where the weather suits their lifestyle and tastes better (Porsanger, Jelena 2004). In the most extreme examples, people want to get away from extreme weather conditions like regular earth quakes, cyclones, tornadoes or even active volcanoes (Preston Rosemary 1985). In less serious circumstances, someone living in a cold country but that really enjoys being outdoors might move to a warmer country (Musoke K.S Isaac 2004). On the other side of the coin, someone whose skin suffers due to a lot of sun exposure might want to move to a country that is milder and rainier.

4.7 Retirement

Many people decide to immigrate to a country when they start thinking about retirement and see that their own countries do not look after the retired well as some other countries around the world (Andrian Martin 2005). Health service might be cheaper, free, or better in a different country and they are simply offered a better lifestyle as a retired person if they move abroad.

4.8 Politics

Another major factor motivating immigration is politics. In the most serious examples, people move away from war, armed conflict and terror groups that are active in their country (Desiree Nilsson 2003). In less serious cases, people feel that their own countries are badly run or there's a certain level of political turmoil that they want to get away from. A lot of people lose faith in their own country's politics and decide to move abroad in order to avoid an uncertain political future.

4.9 Employment

Many people move abroad because of their job. Generally, they will be offered higher employment in the new country or have the opportunity to work in a position that was unavailable to them in their home country (Finnstrom Sverker 2003). Some people move in order to follow a certain career path and others or move for tax purposes. In Dubai, for example, people earn tax-free salaries. In some cases, the employer will be the first to suggest a move abroad, transferring the employee to a different branch of the same company.

4.10　Family

Last but not the least, is family. Many families find themselves separated by distance and may choose to relocate to another country where their loved ones have moved to (Finnstrom Sverker 2003). A common scenario is when a spouse applies for a petition to have their partner and children relocated to their current country of residence. This usually requires them to have been a naturalized citizen of that country before they can apply for the petition.

5.　The Future of Refugees

The future of refugees unfortunately is uncertain as most causes of their separation or fleeing is outside their control. Not until political and civil strife, tribal and ethnic violence, major economies and environment stabilises, the future of the refugees remains a dark cloud.

6.　The Zambian Situation and case of the DRC

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is engaged in an electoral process at various levels (local, provincial, national). As part of this process, Presidential and legislative elections were foreseen in November 2016. Delays in the electoral process and an increasing polarization between the opposition and the current President's party have led to a political tense climate. The Constitution excludes a third mandate for Mr. Kabila, but the opposition suspects him of wanting to extend or renew his term and oppositions suspicions are that the current President doesn`t want to organize election so that he can remain in power for another two years. This situation has created suspicions and tension in the country.

6.1 Security

The protection of the refugees and all humanitarian staff has been assured by the setting up of a Shelter for the Zambia Police Service to provide law and order (Andrian Martin 2005). The service provides protection for the IDPs, and the humanitarian staff operating within the Camp. The Camp is situated on the road side while the Camp is quite vast, especially Kenani 2 Transit Centre where most of the IDPs will be stationed and construction of shelter, WASH, and health facilities is on-going (Bakewell, O. 2000). There is currently no regular patrols by the Policemen possibly because there hasn't been incidences of violence reported and recorded during the day time (Bakewell, O. 2000). The Zambia Police Service however, on the visits conducted to the

Camp does not have adequate staff that can quench any uprising if it were to occur. Since security relates to protection of Camp residents, humanitarian staff and assets from danger and risk, such as violence, attack, damage or theft, it can be said that the Transit Centre is secured.

6.2 Safety

Safety can be looked at from various facets, which will include safety from contracting of communicable diseases, safety from thefts and pic-pocketing, being able to walk freely around the Camp without fear of being mobbed by the refugees for any one reason or another, other than that related to routine work, but also looks at the conducts displayed by the humanitarian staff in terms of how we dress ourselves (not appearing very unique, clearly showing that we are only visitors to the Camp), and not working together to better the situation within the Camp (Bakewell, O. 2000). From the health perspective, there has been a Health surveillance team spearheaded by the District Medical Office in the Camp that has been attending to any health related cases reported and brought to the attention of the team. Safety as regards to personal effects such as mobile phones and other valuables cannot be absolutely guaranteed as the Camp is vast, and the security Officers are only stationed at the designated Police Service Tent. In terms of walking freely, staff and visitors are able to walk freely, but firstly, any new incoming staff, whether a volunteer, or a Contractor has to be reported to the Office of the Refugee Officer, who is the Camp Manager. A go-ahead will be given to go about carrying the assigned duties by the Refugee Officer (Gil Loescher 1992). The dress code mainly has to be work attire or protective attire other than the smart dressing of a short and a tie.

6.3 Camp Management mitigating sources of conflict

The Camp Management has put in place systems to ensure there is daily surveys carried out both within the Camp and beyond (Gil Loescher 1992). This is carried out by joint efforts of the State Security wings, the Zambia Red Cross, and the UN Agency (UN2006a). These are deployed daily to monitor IDPs' daily lives, conduct some counseling sessions, and examine incoming asylum seekers during registration (Masaki. 2007). In terms of planning for the Camp, some commendable work has been done to ensure access roads to resources such as food, WASH

facilities, firewood, child friendly spaces, allocation of adequate spaces for families and creation of green zones.

6.4 Areas that may still pose some risks

The Transit Centre has not been provided with lighting for now, and facilities such as toilets and bathing shelters that are some distance from the shelters can pose as security risks to the refugees (Bakewell, O. 2000). This can also pose as a security risk to ACT Alliance staff working in the Camp. Other risks include lack of education for the larger population of children (who are in the majority). The community has also not yet been infused into provide routine security checks on their fellow refugees. The Police Service and other security providers have not trained the community for this task, though this is a necessity as the population of refugees is growing daily while the number of security personnel has remained static (Gil Loescher 1992). It was also reported that as a result of the population increase, the crime rate has also increased especially at night, and there was a reported case of child assault. It was also reported that beer drinking has also escalated among the refugee community.

7. Conclusion

This paper has not only been written for academic purposes but also for the real situation obtaining in Congo DR. It further engages the readers to know the dehumanization and loss of dignity of people that lack basic needs because of a few individuals that want to cling to political power forever. The case of Congo DR is appalling in the sense that many more people keep on coming into Zambia. Consequently, it is becoming difficult for people that are helping to plan properly.

Though this be the case, the Zambian church has found it to be more fulfilling to give shelter to those who do not have than to wait until space is created. In summary, as a Church it is better to start with what is there and where you are to make a difference.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. *Solidarity, Partnership and Cooperation*- the church of God is called upon to stand with the vulnerable groups, partner with other interest groups pursuing similar interests cooperate with international, regional and nation agencies.

2. ***Commerce, Religion and Culture***- language, beliefs, values and customs- the church need to provide an alternative to prevailing challenges through critical theological reflections. The refugees, who come to live in foreign countries, come with different ethos and culture. Need to be open to the needs of the world as our parish.

3. ***Advocacy and Research***-Advocate for good policies that protect the refugees and agencies that work around the subject.

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