

UNHCR – A possible conflict inhibitor?

A Field Study Conducted in Rwanda April – June 2007

Abstract

It has been long known that militia groups all over the world use refugee camps as recruitment sites, but not much research has been conducted on the subject. Not until recently, when Achvarina and Reich presented their new theory linking the level of security in the camps with the prevalence of recruitment. The theory implies that actors such as UNHCR could act on the problem and therefore act as a conflict inhibitor by offering the needed level of security. To test this I have applied the concept of human security to two empirical cases to see whether UNHCR can offer the security needed according to Achvarina and Reich. In doing so I have reached the conclusion that it's not possible to reach the needed level of security at the present due to budget constraints, but since the necessary channels and knowledge exist it would be possible in the future given the necessary funding.

Keywords: UNHCR, refugee camps, recruitment, human security, Rwanda

Abbreviations

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ARV – Antiretroviral
CFSVA – Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis
DRC – The Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization
FI – Food item
HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDP – Internally displaced person
MCH – Maternal child health
MINALOC- Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs
NFI – Non-food item
NGO – Non-governmental organization
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund
PMTCT – Prevention of mother to child transmission
RCD – Congolese Rally for Democracy
RCD-G – Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma
SGBV - Sexual and gender based violence
VCT – Voluntary counseling and testing
WFP – World Food Program
WHO – World Health Organization

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1 Introduction

The largest remaining security threat in the Great Lakes Region today is the numerous militia groups who remain active throughout the area. These groups pose a threat not only to the regional stability but also to the local residents and the large groups of refugees still residing in various camps. Camps that are frequently used by the militia as rest and recuperation sites, while in the camps they are also known to divert aid from those who need it the most either through stealing or involuntary taxation. Resulting in malnutrition among the refugee population when increased militia activity demands higher contributions. On top of this the camps are also used by these groups for extracting their most valuable supply, new recruits. All of these problems are most often exacerbated when refugees reside for longer times in countries of asylum where they lack economic and educational opportunities, as in the case with the large number of protracted refugee situations found throughout the Great Lakes Region. To improve the security situation, not only for the refugees but for the region as a whole, the militia groups has to be stopped from exploiting the camps since their presence may challenge the implementation of durable solutions such as voluntary repatriation and local integration. And as long as the militias are not refused access to the camps they will keep using them for extracting free supplies, which in turn will enable them to continue the fighting.

1.1 The Study

The aim with this study is to see whether UNHCR, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, can work as a conflict inhibitor through their work of protecting refugees. Can they break the vicious cycle of militias exploiting refugee camps and therefore contribute to creating a more stable and secure environment? My main question is therefore;

- Can UNHCR work as a conflict inhibitor regarding the situation in the Great Lakes Region?

To get a reasonable amount of information to process I have chosen to focus on one country within the chosen region, Rwanda. I chose this country because of its involvement in the conflict, its geographical position and its large number of refugees. The country's entire western parts border with the Democratic Republic of Congo's eastern parts, which are used as a base by the majority of the

militia groups in the area. Along the same boarder you can find the majority of the refugee camps, which makes them easy to target for the militias. Among the camps I have chosen to focus on the two largest, Gihembe outside of Byumba and Kiziba outside of Kibuye, both containing about 18 000 Congolese refugees each. The actor I have chosen to focus on, as mentioned above, is UNHCR and its implementing partners. Some may question this choice since according to international law it is states that are mainly responsible for its citizens (or other countries in the role of country of asylum) security. But this does not mean that they are solely responsible for caring for and protecting refugees on their territory. Today you can find strong support for the fact that this responsibility is shared with UNHCR through the mandate given the agency by the UN back in 1950.¹

By exploring the UNHCR's possibilities to work as a conflict inhibitor, I will be testing the new theory presented by Vera Achvarina and Simon F. Reich where they argue that there is a direct link to be found between the recruitment and number of child soldiers and the level of access for armed groups to refugee camps. According to their theory, the three dominating explanations for the presence of child soldiers; high levels of poverty, rising orphan rates and the innovation of smaller and lighter arms, are to be seen as contributing, but not decisive, factors. Instead, the number of child soldiers is a direct reflection of the militia groups level of access to refugee camps.² This theory would therefore give UNHCR the incentive to try and protect the camps in order to stop the militias recruitment, which in the long run would help to implement durable solutions for the refugees under their care.

To investigate whether UNHCR is providing the level of security needed for the refugees I will apply the concept of human security. I will use this concept since its broader than the traditional security concept, including human rights, such as for example education and health. The human security concept focuses on individual rather than state security arguing that a people-centered view is necessary for national, regional and in the end global security. According to the concept the best way of tackling insecurity is trough a guarantee of "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want", an implementation of basic food-, health- and personal security amongst others.³ I will in this thesis use the theory to see whether UNHCR is implementing the security needed to make the camps and its inhabitants less prone to the militias' campaigns.

¹ UNHCR, 2003, "An Operations Management Handbook for UNHCR's Partners", pp. 3-6

² Achvarina, Vera, Reich, Simon F., 2006, "No Place to Hide – Refugees, Displaced Persons, and the Recruitment of Child Soldiers", *International Security*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 127-164

³ Fouinat, Francois, 2004, "A Comprehensive framework for human security", *Conflict, Security and Development*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 289-297

1.2 Method

In this thesis I have used a qualitative method in what could be described as a theory-driven research process. The theory used as a foundation for this thesis is Achvarina and Reich's theory regarding refugee camp security mentioned above. A theory that implies that actors like UNHCR could work as a conflict inhibitor by keeping the camps secure. I will test this assumption against empirical conditions by applying the human security concept. In doing so, I have relied mainly on interviews as well as my own observations in the field, made during a two-month stay in Rwanda from April to June 2007.⁴ The people selected for the interviews represent the actors that I have chosen to focus on, UNHCR and its implementing partners. The Rwandan government, who is one of those partners, refused to participate probably due to the official line that recruitment does not take place on Rwandan soil. Part from this exception, all of the relevant actors complied to participate.⁵ For the interviews I used a semi-structured technique, which means that the interview is started off by specified questions but the interviewer is free to probe beyond the answers. This allows the interviewer to gain more information since you can seek both clarification and elaboration on the given answer. It is also believed that the interviewed subject's viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation rather than in a standardized interview or questionnaire.⁶ Some of the interviews are kept confidential on request from the interviewed due to the politically sensitive topic.

1.3 Material and previous research

The material used in this thesis is first hand, collected on site, as well as second hand material such as reports and scientific articles. Recruitment in refugee camps, often of young men and women under 18, has not been a preoccupation of scholars in security studies therefore relatively little material has been written on the topic. The literature that does exist is fairly sparse and most of it is written by civil-society communities and members of various think tanks, rather than by academics. The first comprehensive book on the subject, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict*, was written back in 1994 by Guy Goodwin-Gill and Ilene Cohn.⁷ The book focuses on poverty as the main explanation but overlooks the potential role of armed forces access to vulnerable refugees. The

⁴ Unfortunately I was not able to visit the camps due to the fact that the security situation deteriorated during the time I spent in the country.

⁵ The relevant implementing partners are UNICEF, WFP and Save the Children

⁶ Flick, Uwe, 2006, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 98, 149, 155-157

⁷ Goodwin-Gill, Guy, Cohn, Ilene, 1994, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict*, New York: Clarendon

literature on refugee security in general is scarce, and the debate focuses mainly on their legal protection.⁸ When it comes to the implementation of that same protection, such as refugee camp security, there is not much literature to be found. Instead you have to rely on various reports from UN agencies and NGO's that seldom offer any deeper analysis. There is a need to fill this existing gap; scholarly work could contribute with a more systematic formulation of the problems as well as its explanations and a more rigorous comparison of their explanatory power. I therefore hope this thesis will be able to contribute to reducing the existing gap.

⁸ See, for example, Steiner, Niklaus, Gibney, Mark, Loescher, Gil, 2003, *Problems of Protection – The UNHCR, Refugees and Human Rights*, New York: Routledge

2 Theoretical framework

In this chapter I will present the theoretical framework used in this thesis. First I will present the new theory by Vera Achvarina and Simon F. Reich where they link the recruitment and prevalence of child soldiers with the level of security provided in refugee camps. By this they challenge the existing dominating explanations; high poverty levels, rising orphan rates and the innovation of smaller and lighter arms. Then I will continue with the outlining of the human security concept.

2.1 The link between refugee camp security and the recruitment of child soldiers

According to UN sources the number of child soldiers grew with 100 000 from 1988 to reach 300 000 in 2002. This increase could be explained by the evidence drawn from the individual conflicts that have taken place since 2002, which suggests that the new wars are often characterized by an extreme use of under-aged soldiers. The use of child soldiers has become a principal component in conflicts in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. The epicenter of the problem is however Africa where the largest concentration of both conflicts and child soldiers are to be found. Estimates suggests that about 120 000 children, 40% of the world child soldiers, were soldiering in Africa at the beginning of the 21st century. In recent years Africa has been the continent to experience the fastest growth in the use of child soldiers, simultaneously as the recruitment has gone up the recruited children's age has dropped from their teenage years to as low as nine or ten.⁹

Based on the volume of conflicts and the number of child soldiers Vera Achvarina and Simon F. Reich chose Africa as the place from which to build their analysis. They confine their data analysis to cases of intrastate conflicts in Africa between 1975 and 2002. The time span was chosen because of the data availability, it turned out to be impossible to recover reliable material prior to 1975. The choice to only examine intrastate conflicts were based on the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF's, report "Reintegration of Child Soldiers" where the conclusion is reached that the conflicts that involve child soldiers are usually relatively small, internal struggles.¹⁰ For further case selection they used

⁹ Achvarina, et al., 2006, pp. 128-131

¹⁰ Achvarina et al., 2006, p. 141, UNICEF, 2003, "Reintegration of Child Soldiers"

the Armed Conflict Database compiled by Håvard Strand where they were able to find 59 intrastate conflicts during the time span chosen. Out of those 59 conflicts child soldiers were reported present in 33. In the end Achvarina and Reich were able to find 12 cases where there were confirmed reporting of child soldier numbers which would enable the authors to calculate positive child soldier ratios. In the other cases substantial (12 cases) or minor (9 cases) use of child soldiers were reported but reliable estimates were unavailable.¹¹ Out of the 12 cases with confirmed use of child soldiers 5 occurred in the Great Lakes Region (Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Rwanda and 2 cases in Burundi).¹² After selecting their cases they test their own theory as well as the three so far dominant explanations for the prevalence of child soldiers mentioned above.

2.1.1 Poverty rates

According to a number of nongovernmental organisations, NGO's, activists and academics poverty should be seen as the key factor in explaining the phenomenon of child soldiers. Amongst those academics are Guy Goodwin-Gill and Ilene Cohn who are regarded to have written the first comprehensive book on the subject, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict*.¹³ And the linkage makes sense. First of all many former child soldiers when interviewed named poverty as the reason for recruitment, and second rich countries don't employ child soldiers in battle. Academics that believe that poverty is a casual factor often rely on arguments like the following; armed conflict often lead to food shortages as a result of the destruction of the countries' productive capacity and infrastructure. The lack of food or the destruction of productive resources then forces families to volunteer their children to rebel or government forces. They may be promised compensation or they may be enticed by the opportunity the children may get to loot, something the families may gain from.

But according to Achvarina and Reich this argument lacks systematic explanatory power. They consider it to be a too simplistic explanation since many poor children in war zones do not become soldiers. Furthermore, they lack a connection between the variation in poverty rates and the child soldier rates, something the experts seems to have overlooked.¹⁴ To try this poverty based explanation and to fill the gap they examine the graphical relationship between poverty and child soldier rates from the 12 cases. As the measure of national poverty they use the percentage of the population estimated below the poverty line, as defined by the World Bank as the minimum standard required by an individual to fulfil her or his basic non-food and food needs. The evidence they generated questions whether poverty actually explains the enormous variations in

¹¹ Achvarina et al., 2006, p. 142

¹² Achvarina et al., 2006, p. 143, table 1

¹³ Achvarina et al., 2006, p. 133, Goodwin-Gill, Guy, Cohn, Ilene, 1994, *Child Soldiers: The Role of Children in Armed Conflict*, New York: Clarendon

¹⁴ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp. 133-134

child soldier rates. This since they could not find a corresponding increase in poverty rates and child soldier rates.¹⁵ According to Achvarina and Reich this would show that even if they had used a more sophisticated way to measure poverty they would still come to the conclusion that poverty is a necessary rather than sufficient condition for child soldiering.¹⁶

2.1.2 Orphan rates

Experts, UNICEF and various NGO's all point at the significance of the vulnerability to recruitment of children who come from backgrounds where they have weakened bonds with parents and family or if they have lost them altogether. Their argument is that children who are orphaned are especially susceptible to either threats or incentives, that they without parental guidance are far more likely to join rebel forces. Either coerced by the threat of punishment or death or lured by the promise of food, protection and glory.¹⁷ But Achvarina and Reich argue that for the orphan argument to have explanatory power, a systematic relationship between the ratio of orphans and the ratio of child soldiers as belligerents must be evident. To evaluate the relationship between the number of child recruits and the number of orphans Achvarina and Reich adopted a measure of child orphans from a Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS report on orphan estimates. They obtained the percentage of orphans relative to all children in the 0-14 age group for one year at the midpoint of each conflict. The result showed no discernable relationship between orphan rates and the rates of participating child soldiers.¹⁸

2.1.3 Globalization of small arms

There are two main reasons for why experts have focused on the connection between the global spread of small arms and increased child soldier rates. First, the general issue of small arms has been a primary focus of a large NGO lobby backed by recent major studies. And second, the release of Dr. P.W. Singer's book *Children at War* which received a lot of attention.¹⁹ In his book Singer argues that a combination of three factors explains the rise in recruitment; technological improvements that have made arms smaller and easier to use, the flood of arms into the international arms market after the end of the Cold War and the shift in

¹⁵ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp. 144-145

¹⁶ Achvarina et al., 2006, p. 145

¹⁷ See for example, Barnitz, Laura, 1997, *Child Soldiers: Youth who Participate in Armed Conflict*, Washington: Youth Advocate Program International, Human Rights Watch, "Stop the Use of Child Soldiers! US. Congress Condemns the Use of Children", <http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/congress.htm> , 2007-06-14

¹⁸ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp. 134-135

¹⁹ Singer, P.W., 2005, *Children at War*, Berkeley: University of California Press

the predominant form of intrastate conflicts which have become more brutal.²⁰ According to Achvarina and Reich the small arms argument suffers from several problems. One is that one could argue that the new technology coupled with the global spread of small arms may in large part explain the third element on Singer's list, the more brutal violence. Gangs disguising themselves as armies in fragile states gain easy access to arms and thus the opportunity to assert themselves. A new form of violence seems almost inevitable in this setting, a shift from the clinical methods of targeted bombings in interstate wars to intense ground combat, looting and ethnic cleansing in intrastate conflicts. The criminalized violence describe by Singer is therefore not independent of the other processes he describes but a product of them according to Achvarina and Reich. Further they mean that Singer contradicts himself by focusing on children in auxiliary roles such as spies, logistics and sex slaves, he also discusses their tendency to be used by military commanders as "cannon fodder". The children are then often sent into battle unarmed as a diversionary tactic because of the shortage of arms and ammunition, which Singer identifies as so essential to their growth in numbers in the first place.²¹

Finally Achvarina and Reich have a problem with the lack of reliable data, which makes it hard to establish a linkage between the prevalence of small arms and child recruitment. They managed to obtain official statistics on arms sales to individual countries but this only provides a part of the picture given the extensive volume of the illicit arms trade market. The figures on this illicit trade are notoriously unreliable and hard to obtain, they tend to miss out on the indirect trade through neighboring countries by various rebel forces. Based on this Achvarina and Reich draw the conclusion that the globalization of small arms should be seen more as a result, rather than cause, when it comes to the rising number of child recruits.²²

2.1.4 An alternative explanation: Access to refugee camps

After dismissing the to date dominant explanations as hard to operationalize systematically across cases and as arguments that generally offer anecdotal evidence rather than any viable, academic testing they present and test their own theory.

According to them the key factor explaining the number of recruited child soldiers is the degree of access to refugee (or IDP) camps gained by the belligerent parties. A child may be lured by the prospect of escaping poverty, high orphan rates may make these children even more prone to either threats or incentives but it is the degree of vulnerable children in refugee camps that ultimately explains their participation rates. According to UNHCR 57% of the

²⁰ Singer, 2005, pp. 38-42

²¹ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp. 135-137, Singer, 2005, pp. 16, 47

²² Achvarina et al., 2006, p. 137

refugees living in UNHCR-mandated facilities in Africa are under 18 years old.²³ These large groups of vulnerable children make a tempting target for armed forces seeking recruits in absence of a sufficient deterrent. Achvarina and Reich therefore argue that a larger percentage of child soldiers will be found where the militias can gain relatively easy access, for infiltration or raids, to camps. Therefore protection from access by militias is crucial. Without that needed protection the camps form an important resource pool for child recruits. The camps are, historically, supposed to be protected under international law and protocols, but this protection is often in practice uneven or nonexistent. For the refugees reaching a camp does not guarantee either personal security nor relief from hunger, often it is little more than a place for those in danger to congregate. This results in a frequent infiltration of camps by militia groups who often become indistinct from the *bona fide* refugees²⁴ so that they can recruit the camps inhabitants. They often seize or enlist inhabitants through the use of coercion or propaganda, a phenomenon referred to as “refugee manipulation and militarization”. A phenomenon that is to be found in about 15% of all refugee crises around the world according to the UNHCR. Based on these facts Achvarina and Reich anticipate that the larger the number of instances of camp militarization our outside incursions the higher the number of child recruits.²⁵

In testing their theory they operationalized the independent variable of access as a ratio and the numerator was calculated by adding together instances of refugee camp militarization and attacks on the camps during the years of conflict in each case. To assess the camps militarization and the degree of access they used relevant reports, papers, information provided by relevant organizations and newspaper articles. The result shows strong support for their theory that access to camps correlates with the ratio of child soldiers.²⁶

2.1.5 Achvarina and Reich’s conclusion

In their article Achvarina and Reich examined and tested the prevailing explanations for the variation in child soldier rates against their own, new theory. When it comes to poverty in war, often seen as the primary reason, they found that poverty may be a necessary factor but it does not offer an effective casual explanation. A large pool of orphans is another factor discussed as a cause for high levels of child soldiers, but yet again Achvarina and Reich could not find a strong relationship between the number of orphans and the number of child recruits. In contrast their evidence instead shows a relatively strong relationship between the access to refugee camps and high child soldier rates, presumably children are not as susceptible if well protected in camps.²⁷

²³ UNHCR, 2001, ”Refugee Children in Africa: Trends and Patterns in the Refugee Population in Africa below the Age of 18 Years, 2000”, p. 1

²⁴ Rightful/lawful refugees

²⁵ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp. 138-141

²⁶ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp.146-149

²⁷ Achvarina et al., 2006, p.163

Poverty, orphan rates and small arms are all very hard to influence in the short term since they are extensive structural problems. Refugee camps however can be protected interim given the appropriate level of political and material resources. Therefore Achvarina and Reich's new theory would give the policymakers the incentive to act and actors like UNHCR the possibility to not just standby and watch but to act on the problem.²⁸

2.2 The Human Security concept

Historically security has been considered as both a prerogative and responsibility of states, but this has changed during recent years as the evolution of threats has altered this understanding. The world situation has become infinitely more complex since the end of the Cold War, with interrelated threats associated with genocide, civil war and the displacement of populations. To describe this new situation a new concept, human security, has become widely spread during the last couple of years. At the center of this concept you find the distinction between national security and human security, while national security focuses on the protection of the state from external attacks human security focuses on the protection of the individual from any type form of violence.²⁹

All proponents of human security agree that its primary goal is the protection of individuals, but the consensus breaks down when it comes to the question what they should be protected from. Here you can find two different alignments, one "narrow" and one "broad". The proponents of the more "narrow" definition focuses on violent threats towards individuals while recognizing that these threats are associated with poverty, lack of state capacity and various forms of political and socio-economic inequity. The "broader" definition on the other hand is articulated in the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP's, *Human Development Report* from 1994 and the Commission on Human Security's report *Human Security Now* from 2003. They argue that hunger, disease and natural disasters should be included on the security agenda since they kill far more people than terrorism, war and genocide combined.³⁰ In this thesis I will adopt the "broader" definition of the concept as presented below.

²⁸ Achvarina et al., 2006, pp. 163-164

²⁹ Fouinat, Francois, 2004, "A Comprehensive Framework for Human Security", *Conflict, Security and Development*, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 289, Human Security Center, "The Human Security Report 2005", <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/content/view/24/59/>, 2007-05-24

³⁰ Human Security Centre, "Human Security Report 2005", <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/content/view/24/59/>, 2007-05-24

2.2.1 UNDP's definition of the human security concept

According to the “broader” definition presented by the UNDP in its 1994 *Human Development Report* the concept can be said to have two main aspects. First, it means safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression. And second, it means protection from hurtful and sudden disruptions in daily life, whether at work, in the home or in the community. The loss of human security can be an abrupt and loud emergency or it can be a silent and slow process. It can be human made, by for example wrong policy choices, or it can originate from the forces of nature. It's important to point out the difference between human security and human development as to not confuse the two. Human development is a much wider concept defined as a process of widening the range of choices for people, as defined in previous *Human Development Reports*. Human Security on the other hand means that they can enjoy and practice these choices without fear for their own security and that they can feel relatively confident that they will be able to do so tomorrow as well.³¹

So there is of course a close link between the two concepts, progress in one area enhances the chances of progress in the other. Limited or failed human development leads to a backlog of human deprivation such as poverty, hunger, disease and persisting disparities between ethnic communities or regions. In the end this backlog in access to various opportunities can lead to violence. People have a tendency to become less tolerant when they perceive a threat towards their own security, which makes them more prone to various forms of propaganda. Or, where people see the basis for their livelihood erode, such as access to food and water, political conflict may erupt.³²

As mentioned earlier there are two major components in human security, “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want”. The list of threats towards those components is long, but most of them can be categorized under several main categories:

- Economic security
- Food security
- Health security
- Personal security
- Community security
- Political security
- Environmental security

Out of those categories the first four are relevant for this thesis since they are the once that UNHCR actually has influence over. They are also included in the UNHCR operational goals when it comes to providing assistance for camp-based

³¹ UNDP, “Human Development Report 1994”, p. 22,
http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf , 2007-06-03

³² UNDP, “Human Development Report 1994”, pp. 22-23
http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf , 2007-06-03

refugees; to provide protection and assistance including shelter, health care, water and sanitation and to implement self-reliance activities.³³

³³ UNHCR, 2006, “Country Operations Plan 2007: Rwanda”, UNHCR Branch Office Kigali, p. 3

3 Rwanda

In this chapter I will apply the human security concepts various categories, mentioned above, to the current situation in Rwanda to see whether UNHCR can implement the needed level of security in the refugee camps. But I will start with a presentation of the current situation in the camps of Gihembe and Kiziba.

3.1 The Gihembe and Kiziba camps

To date UNHCR operates four camps in cooperation with the Government of Rwanda, several implementing partners and UN agencies, providing water, sanitation, healthcare, education and logistics. The two largest camps each hold almost 18 000 Congolese refugees and are placed in Gicumbi District outside of Byumba (Gihembe) and in Karongi District outside of Kibuye (Kiziba). The overwhelming majority of the refugees originate from the DRC's eastern Kivu provinces and came to Rwanda during the 1990s due to the Second DRC War. However, refugees from the eastern DRC provinces has been arriving continuously over the years due to the constant insecurity in the area, for example 2 500 Congolese refugees arrived in the end of 2006 due to the clashes between the Congolese army and Nkunda's rebels³⁴. Another group of about 150 people arrived as late as in March this year due to fighting in the South Kivu.³⁵

According to the latest figures 17 999 people live in Gihembe and 17 958 in Kiziba, out of those 11 334 respectively 11 277 are in the ages of 0-17 years old. That adds up to just over 60% for both of the camps, placing them above the average of 56% for the continent as a whole. Out of those under 18 just over 50% are girls which correlate with the average of 45-55% for camps in Africa in general.³⁶

So fare, repatriation has been the main durable solution pursued by the UNHCR, as scarcity of land (Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa with 340 persons per square kilometer) and limited employment opportunities make local integration difficult. During 2006 UNHCR repatriated about 600 refugees from Burundi but repatriation of Congolese refugees, such as

³⁴ Laurent Nkunda is a former General in the Congolese Armed Forces, but during the Second Congo War he joined the Congolese Rally for Democracy, RDC. In September 2005 he was indicted for war crimes and is currently under investigation by the ICC.

³⁵ UNHCR, 2007, "Rwanda Country Information Brief", UNHCR Branch Office Kigali

³⁶ UNHCR, 2001, "Refugee Children in Africa, Trends and Patterns in the Refugee Population in Africa Below the age of 18, 2000", pp. 1-2, UNHCR, 2007, "Rwanda Country Information Brief", UNHCR Branch Office Kigali

the 35 000 people living in Gihembe and Kiziba, is not promoted due to the volatile situation in the DRC. Another durable solution pursued by the UNHCR is resettlement, in 2006 a total of 112 refugees (mainly from Burundi and the DRC) were resettled to Europe, the USA, Australia and Canada. The UNHCR criteria for resettlement include cases of women at risk, medical needs, legal and physical protection problems and family reunification. UNHCR considers resettlement of strategic use in order to offer a suitable solution for those who cannot be considered for repatriation. Despite that the majority of the refugees in the Gihembe and Kiziba camps still remain in the same camps where they have spent the last decade.³⁷

3.2 Economic security

For an individual to reach economic security an assured basic income is required, usually from productive and profitable work or in the last resort from a publicly financed safety net. In many developing countries the lack of economic security and the high levels of unemployment is one of the main underlying factors when it comes to political tensions and ethnic violence. Without the assurance of a social safety net the poorest cannot survive not even for a short period of time without an income. Many of them rely on family or community support. The most insecure working conditions of all are usually to be found in the informal sector, which in several developing countries has a high proportion of the total employment. In Africa it is estimated to account for over 60%. Though for many people the only option to raise an income is self-employment, which can be even less secure than wage employment and those at the bottom of the ladder often find it difficult to make ends meet.³⁸

The refugees in the Gihembe and Kiziba camps are only given a limited amount of non-food items, NFI's and food items, FI's. Items such as soap, jerry cans, blankets, red flannel and kitchen sets are distributed on a monthly basis as is the food basket delivered by the World Food Program, WFP. Since the supplies are limited the refugees need money to buy items that are not included such as clothes and certain vegetables and fruit that are needed to supplement their diet. To get this money they often sell some of their ration, some lucky refugees have found low-paying jobs within the camps but many more have to go outside the camps and find that their status affects the positions they can take and reduces their pay considerably.³⁹ According to Rwandan national law, article 22 of the Law 34/2001, refugees have the right to employment in Rwanda. But in practice many are unable to get jobs even if qualified as most jobs are reserved for people holding Rwandese nationality. Work permits are quite expensive and are therefore

³⁷ UNHCR, "Rwanda Country Information Brief", UNHCR Branch Office Kigali

³⁸ UNDP, "Human Development Report 1994", pp. 25-26,
http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf, 2007-06-03

³⁹ Interview with UNHCR representative, 2007-05-20, Kigali

out of reach for most refugees, which normally results in refugees trying to get casual work in building construction, mechanics and tilling land. Even though many refugees may have more specialized skills only health workers and teachers are able to put their professional skills to work in the camps where they might be employed at health stations and schools. In addition, access to land for refugees are extremely limited due to the general scarcity of land and the high population density. This inhibits the refugees from even the most basic form of money generating activities such as self-employment. They do not even have the right to collect firewood, that is to be provided for them by one of UNHCR's partners.⁴⁰

For the younger refugees to have at least a chance of finding qualified work in the future, education is a necessity. In cooperation with their partner organizations (Save the Children and UNICEF), UNHCR provides primary and lower secondary education to 5 700 children in the Gihembe and Kiziba camps. Due to budget constraints, secondary and tertiary education still represent major challenges, problems in this area may lead to serious problems of protection. Only about 40% of the secondary school-aged children in the camps attend school consistently, to be compared with 75% for the rest of the country. Also vocational activities for the adolescent youth have been limited due to budget constraints. The lack of funding leaves the refugee children without any way to develop professional skills that could make them self-reliant and more open for the solution promoted by UNHCR, repatriation.⁴¹

Based on this, the conclusion can be drawn that the refugees in the camps today do not enjoy economic security since they do not have an assured basic income or a satisfactory security net, in this case aid, to replace that self-earned income.

3.3 Food security

Food security is reached when all people at all times have both economic and physical access to basic food. This requires more than just enough food to go around, it requires that people have ready access to food – that they have an “entitlement” to food. By growing it for themselves, by buying it or by taking advantage of some form of public distribution system. The availability of food is thus a necessary condition for food security, but not a sufficient one. Even when enough food is available people can starve as has happened during many famines. If you look at the world as a whole the availability of food is not a problem, there is in fact enough food to offer everyone in the world around 2 500 calories a day which is actually 200 calories more than the basic minimum. Unfortunately this does not mean that everyone gets enough to eat, in Sub-Saharan Africa about 30% of population is thought to be undernourished. Both Governments and various

⁴⁰ UNHCR, 2006, “Country Operations Plan 2007: Rwanda”, UNHCR Branch Office Kigali, p. 5, Interview UNHCR representative Beatriz Gonzalez Garcia, 2007-05-07, Kigali

⁴¹ UNHCR, 2007, “Rwanda Country Information Brief”, UNHCR Branch Office Kigali, p. 9

international agencies have tried several ways of increasing food security but these schemes have only had a limited impact. There is a close link to be found between access to food and access to work, assets and an insured income. Without a stable income and economic security the food security is at risk.⁴²

Rwanda is a food deficit country, importing at least 130 000 tons of food annually, including food aid. Prices of domestic livestock and crops are higher than in neighboring countries due to the fact that Rwanda is a high cost producer with land scarcity, it is landlocked, with high transport costs for food import and its domestic supply is inadequate for domestic demand. Food insecurity and vulnerability to shocks are high, the 2006 CFSVA⁴³ indicates that 28% (2,1 million) of Rwandans were chronically food insecure and another 50% were moderately or highly vulnerable to shocks, while only 21% were to be considered as food secure. The most food insecure households are the agricultural laborers, farmers and those exercising marginal livelihoods such as the refugee population. UNHCR has during the last year been prevented from delivering provisions to refugees at the accepted standards due to funding constraints. The refugees are therefore encouraged to contribute in sectors such as shelter so that UNHCR can focus on health, water and education. As one of UNHCR's partners WFP has been given the task to deliver the food rations with the objective to meet the daily needs of the refugees. Which they so far has managed to do with a few exceptions, such as a 30% reduction in March-May 2005 and a 66% reduction in May-September 2005.⁴⁴

In the Gihembe and Kiziba camps the refugees receive a ration that provide minimum protein-energy and micronutrient requirements on a monthly basis. Those rations include oil, maize, pulses, salt, sugar and cereal. The WFP provides food on the basis of needs as determined between WFP and UNHCR, UNHCR advises the monthly requirements based on figures from the PROGRES refugee database. A database that was installed back in 2002, which enables the field staff to update the figures on a weekly basis. At the monthly food deliveries the food is directly distributed to the refugees and at each distribution beneficiary lists are provided by UNHCR and food ration cards are issued in the names of female representatives of households to make sure the food reaches the right people. Every two months deliveries for therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes are made to the UNHCR-contracted implementing partners in each camp. All the refugee operations are being monitored by the Joint Assessment Mission, consisting of representatives from WFP, FAO and UNHCR. Together they monitor changes in the beneficiaries' livelihoods and the impact of the food aid.⁴⁵

⁴² UNDP, "Human Development Report 1994", p.27 ,
http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf

⁴³ CFSVA, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis conducted by WFP in cooperation with the Rwandan National Institute of Statistics

⁴⁴ WFP, 2007, "Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation, Rwanda 1053.0 – Assistance to refugees and recovery operations for the most vulnerable households", pp. 2, 4-5

⁴⁵ WFP, 2007, "Protracted relief and Recovery...", p. 11, Interview with WFP representative Jean-Damascène Hitayezu, 2007-05-28, Kigali

Despite the WFP's efforts, one of the largest problems found in the camps today is the lack of food. Since the refugees are given limited supplies they often have to sell off parts of their rations to gain money to buy supplementary fruits and vegetables to get a versatile diet, as mentioned above. The lack of food does not only affect the refugees' need for money but it also affects the family planning efforts. Family planning has had virtually no effect in the camps since families purposefully increase the number of children to increase their food rations. A six-month-old baby is given the same monthly food ration as an adult, therefore many refugees only see the short term food gain in having another baby and not the long term consequences of even more mouths to feed and backs to clothe.⁴⁶

Based on this the refugees in Gihembe and Kiziba do not enjoy the full level of food security since they do not fill the requirement of both economic and physical access to basic food. Sure, they are given rations by the WFP that covers the most basic needs, but they are not guaranteed that the rations will be delivered as during 2005 when budget constraints forced the WFP to cut back. Since their economic security is not met, they often lack the means to compensate for the food shortage, which in turn affects their level of health security.

3.4 Health security

The major causes of death today in developing countries are infectious and nutritional diseases. The most common killers among children as well as adults are respiratory infections such as viral diarrhea, amoebiasis and bacillary dysentery. Many childhood infections such as measles, whooping cough and chicken pox become fatal in nutritionally deprived children. Malnutrition tends to weaken the immune system and increase both the likelihood and severity of infectious disease. According to the World Health Organization, WHO, interaction between nutrition and infection to produce the "malnutrition/infection complex" create the greatest public health problem in the world. In developing nations vector-borne parasitic infections are also a common cause of morbidity. Among the infectious diseases the most prominent ones are malaria, schistosomiasis, trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness in Africa) and filariasis. These diseases all tend to be chronic and debilitating infections, but malaria is also the leading cause of death in for children in tropical countries. The rest of them certainly shorten the life span.⁴⁷

To avoid diseases as the once mentioned above, for a maximum public health impact in many developing countries the greatest effort should be put on improving environmental quality. This could be done by providing clean water, adequate rations of food, better housing, better sanitation, reduced population growth, control of insects and vertebrates that provide the vectors and reservoirs

⁴⁶ Interview with UNHCR representative Beatriz Gonzalez Garcia, 2007-05-07, Kigali

⁴⁷ Southwick, Charles H., 1996, *Global Ecology in Human Perspective*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 283-285

of disease organisms and vaccination programs to eliminate diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough and polio.⁴⁸ All of these factors should be provided for in order to reach a level of acceptable health security. When poor people in general have less health security, the situation for women is particularly difficult. One of the most serious dangers they face is childbirth; every minute a woman dies needlessly of pregnancy –related causes. That adds up to 500 000 women lost every year and another 8 million or more who suffer from life-long health consequences from the complications of pregnancy. The lack of progress in reducing maternal mortality in many countries highlights the low value put on women and testifies to their limited voice in setting public priorities.⁴⁹

Yet another increasing source of health insecurity for both sexes is the spread of HIV/AIDS. While the refugee status should not be equated with an increased risk of contracting HIV, the nature of the refugee environment may increase the vulnerability of people, especially children, adolescents and women, to the disease. HIV/AIDS spreads faster in environments of poverty, lawlessness and social instability, which are the conditions that often give rise to or accompany forced displacement.⁵⁰

In Gihembe and Kiziba, as part of starting up a comprehensive prevention and treatment program for HIV/AIDS, community mobilization with educational activities especially focusing on decreasing the stigma and encouraging testing are underway. These activities include sensitization campaigns for behavioral change, Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) and Prevention of mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT). In 2006 2 340 refugees in the camps benefited from VCT services and almost 100 refugees received antiretroviral treatment (ARV).⁵¹ The Gihembe camp's anti-AIDS youth club, which has been active for a few years now, has been sent out to visit other camps in the country to spread the concept. So far the program has been successful when it comes to breaking down the stigma, more people participate in voluntary counseling and testing, half of the people with confirmed AIDS status participate in the support group and the population in Kiziba camp no longer fear the car that comes to take AIDS patients to Kibuye for hospital treatment. But one of the largest remaining problems in the camps with respect to sexual behavior change is the simple fact that there is nothing for people to do. The children grow up in small, crowded rooms seeing their relatives have sex and then as teenagers they get bored and then turn to sex for passing of time. In Kiziba 1200 condoms are being distributed every month but the camp workers suspect that many of them turn into soccer balls, blown up, tied and wrapped with twine. Since the end of a special project in April 2002 there has been a shortage of condoms in the camps. Despite the regular health education

⁴⁸ Southwick, 1996, p. 287

⁴⁹ UNFPA, 2005, "State of the World Population 2005 – The Promise of Equality", p. 34

⁵⁰ UNHCR, 2006, *The State of the World's Refugees- Human Displacement in the New Millennium*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 85

⁵¹ UNHCR, 2007, "Rwanda Country Information Brief", Branch Office Kigali, p. 9

sessions on the prevention of HIV/AIDS the response to the pandemic in the camps is inadequate due to lack of funding.⁵²

Both in Gihembe and Kiziba you can find health centers in the process of being expanded, in some ways the services being offered here are better than in the surrounding villages. But even so, the refugees lack enough firewood to stay warm, enough food or sheeting and other materials to build houses. The Kiziba camp suffers from severe land shortage and is at present housing almost 18 000 people on half the recommended land for that number. In addition to overcrowding this means that latrine and shower facilities are stretched thin and there are a real concern of a cholera outbreak in the camp should be brought in from outside (at the moment there are reports of a cholera outbreak in nearby Gisenyi). In order to extend the Kiziba camp, it was decided back in 2002 that 530 new houses should be built and in Gihembe 500 houses with earth/mud walls has so far been completed. Additional latrines were built in Kiziba so now an average of 40 persons to one latrine as to 80 before. In Gihembe on average 28 families share one block of five latrines.⁵³

Based on this, the criteria for an acceptable level of health security are not being met in the camps today. This due to inadequate rations of food, housing, sanitation, measures for reduced population growth and vaccination programs. This is not surprising in a country where the national health indicators shows one of the highest under-five mortality rates in the world, 152/1000, where infant mortality is 86/1000 and almost 45% of all children shows signs of stunting. The anemia prevalence for women is 33% and 23% of the total population are under weight.⁵⁴ The WFP in cooperation with UNICEF provide nutritious food to government health centers, as well as the centers within the camps on request from UNHCR, to support programmes in Maternal Child Health, MCH, therapeutic and supplementary feeding, PMTCT and ARV therapy.⁵⁵ This in order to support pregnant and lactating women, mothers with children under five and HIV positive persons receiving ARV therapy. Even though this compensates for some of the inadequately met criteria, it still does not make up for an overall acceptable level of health security for the refugee population in the camps.

3.5 Personal security

One of the most vital aspects of human security for the individual is his or her security from psychological violence. In both industrialized and developing countries

⁵² UNHCR, 2002, "Mid-Year Progress Report 2002", p. 65, Interview with Save the Children representative, Kigali 2007-06-04

⁵³ UNHCR, 2002, "Mid-Year Progress...", p. 65, Interview with UNICEF representative Dr. Dennis Muhoza, Kigali 2007-05-14

⁵⁴ WFP, 2007, "Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation Rwanda 10531.0 – Assistance to refugees and recovery operations for the most vulnerable households", pp. 2-3

⁵⁵ WFP, 2007, "Protracted Relief...", p. 5, Interview with UNICEF representative Dr. Dennis Muhoza, Kigali 2007-05-14

human life is increasingly threatened by unpredictable, sudden violence. The threats can take several different forms such as; threats from the own state (torture), threats from other states (war), threats from other groups (ethnic tension), threats from individuals or gangs, threats directed against women (rape, domestic violence), threats directed towards children (child abuse) and threats against self (suicide, drugs). Two groups that tend to be extra vulnerable are women and children due to their low status in society. In developing countries an estimated one-third of all wives are being battered by their husbands and in the world as a whole one woman out of two thousand ends up being raped. Children, who should be the most protected in any society, are subjects to various forms of abuse. In underdeveloped countries poverty often forces children to take on heavy work at a too young age, to turn to prostitution or to spend their lives on the streets. All which in the end has a great, negative impact on their personal security.⁵⁶

In the camps, scarce resources and the status of the refugees within Rwanda makes it very difficult for the people working in the camps to adequately provide for the inhabitants. The biggest losers tend to be the adolescent girls. Sexual exploitation becomes almost inevitable when the girls aren't given basic items such as clothes within the camps. Their parents cannot afford to provide these items and there is no work to be found so they have no other way to dress themselves than to find an older man who is willing to provide for them, often in exchange for sexual favors. If they cannot find a man to provide for them, they are often forced to turn to prostitution. When women and girls leave the camp in search for work or firewood sexual abuse occurs on a regular basis. In Congolese culture rape is taboo and women are therefore hindered from coming forward and talking about what has happened to them. UNHCR and its partner organizations have been working hard to sensitize the community and encourage women to come forward. Back in September 2006, UNHCR launched the first version of the UNHCR Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) for the prevention of and response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), but this has not been helped by the refugee status. Since they are not Rwandan, refugees' accused of rape will only face jail for a few days before being allowed to return to the camp. The main concern is therefore the legal follow-up for SGBV cases and UNHCR finds itself in urgent need of a legal adviser on the matter.⁵⁷

When it comes to the adolescent boys the main threat to their personal security is the recruitment carried out by militias from their country of origin, the DRC. During 2006 there were reports, including one by a UN panel of experts, that uniformed men suspected of being from a DRC based armed group were recruiting children in refugee camps on Rwandan soil to use as child soldiers. The Rwandan government denied that any activities of the sort were taking place within the countries borders. However, in May 2006 an international

⁵⁶ UNDP, "Human Development Report 1994", pp. 30-31, http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/1994/en/pdf/hdr_1994_ch2.pdf, 2007-06-03

⁵⁷ UNHCR, 2007, "Rwanda Country Information Brief", UNHCR Branch Office Kigali, p. 9, Interview with Save the Children representative, Kigali 2007-06-04

organization reported that uniformed men from Congo-based militias, suspected of belonging to the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma, RCD-G⁵⁸, were recruiting children in the two largest camps, Kiziba and Gihembe, for use as soldiers. On May 10th, according to the international organizations report, 45 children between the ages of 10 and 18 climbed onto a truck parked outside of the entrance to the Kiziba camp and their whereabouts were still unknown by the end of 2006. Parents in the camp told the representatives of the organization that the militia, which they claimed were RCD-G, intended to attract at least 80 new recruits.⁵⁹

It is hard for the organizations working in the camps to monitor the possible recruitment and there are no statistics to be found on exactly how many children that has left them camps and gone back to DRC as soldiers. Some children leave the camps to go to school and others just to visit relatives, it is virtually impossible for UNHCR, who are responsible for updating the databases over the camps inhabitants, to investigate the reason behind them leaving the camps. The only numbers they can be fairly certain of are the ones of the children who do return, but those numbers are not totally reliable since many of the returning child recruits do not want to tell about their ordeal since they can be perceived by other camp inhabitants as traitors. During the first five months of 2007, four child recruits has returned to the Gihembe camp and have there been reintegrated by UNHCR and Save the Children. The reintegration process is adapted after the individuals needs and Save the Children representatives keep making house calls for as long as necessary to check on the child's progress. So fare the reintegration efforts have been successful, even though the returning children often find themselves to be threatened by their fellow camp inhabitants of which some see the returning child as a traitor because they joined enemy forces and some see them as traitors since they abandoned the fighting.⁶⁰

To prevent recruitment and other threats to the children's personal security Save the Children work with preventive programs within the camps. Since October 2006 a Child Protection Committee is to be found in both Kiziba and Gihembe. The Committee consists of members of the refugee community, each camp has been divided into smaller cells with about 50 households in each and each cell gets to send one representative to the Committee. These representatives are then trained in for example demobilization and dialogue with children and their job is to report cases of abuse within their cell. Save the Children also conduct peer education where children are being educated to help each other, the peer educators then cooperate with the Committee to create a safety net for the children in the camps. However, it becomes difficult for Save the Children to handle the problem with recruitment since their official stand is that none of the kind exists, all in line with the official policy of the Rwandan government. Therefore, it is only recently that they started working against the ideology spread

⁵⁸ RCD-G is a fraction of RCD, Congolese Rally for Democracy. The group, backed by the Rwandan government, played a major part in the Second Congo War (1998-2002)

⁵⁹ Center for Defense Information, 2006, "State Department Reports on the Use of Child Soldiers", <http://www.cdi.org/PDFs/CSHRUpdates2005.pdf> , 2007-06-17

⁶⁰ Interview with Save the Children representative, Kigali 2007-06-04

by the militia through education, teaching the children about exploitation and their rights. They also inform about the potential dangers connected with being recruited and taken back to the DRC. Whether this works or not is hard to determine since they do not know how many children that were recruited from the start, but according to Save the Children representatives that works in the camps the children seems to listen and as their safety net improves the ideology spread by the militia seems to be losing ground.⁶¹

When it comes to the overall security in the camps the responsibility falls on the Rwandan government and the Ministry of Local Government, Community Development and Social Affairs, MINALOC. They keep police officers from the local stations in the camps day and night, the only problem is that only 2 officers work in each camp containing almost 18 000 individuals. The constant lack of security forces UNHCR's staff and their partner organizations representatives to leave the camps at 17 o'clock every evening since their security cannot be guaranteed after dark.⁶² Based on this, the refugees' personal security needs are not being met since they are not being protected from either threats from other groups or individuals and since the women and children are not being protected from various forms of abuse, even though the security net is widening abuse is still common. Today the personal security level depends on who you are, if you are a man, women, boy or girl. Personal security is therefore far from guaranteed for all of the camps inhabitants.

⁶¹ Interview with Save the Children representative Deborah Livingstone, Kigali 2007-05-24, Save the Children, 2007, "Analyse de la situation des droits de l'enfant dans le district de Gicumbi", Branch Office Kigali, p.53

⁶² Interview with Save the Children representative, Kigali 2007-06-04, Interview with UNHCR representative Beatriz Gonzalez Garcia, Kigali 2007-05-07

4 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter I will through a conclusion answer the question asked in the first chapter; Can UNHCR work as a conflict inhibitor regarding the situation in the Great Lakes Region?

While evaluating UNHCR's work in the camps of Gihembe and Kiziba it is important to remember that their activities are regulated by the mandate given to the agency, they cannot act as a "free agent" like some of their partner NGO's. But that same mandate does give them the responsibility of providing the refugees with comprehensive protection so when it comes to security related issues the mandate should not be an obstacle. Even though the UNHCR branch office in Kigali has listed the provision of comprehensive protection on the top of their list of operational goals for 2007, my study shows that they are far from reaching that goal. A goal that according to Achvarina and Reich's theory is crucial since the refugee camps security, according to them, is vital for hindering recruitment by the militia and therefore also crucial for the UNHCR's possibility to work as a conflict inhibitor.⁶³

Camps may be a convenient way to channel and distribute humanitarian aid to large groups of refugees as the ones in Gihembe and Kiziba, but at the same time the camps are unnatural, closed environments that can leave refugees vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation. To avoid that a basic level of security is needed. While talking about security today the new view of human security is winning ground, the new concept links the security concerns of individuals and communities to a wider range of threats including, but not restricted to, physical violence. The concept of effective protection had evolved along with changes in the perception of various dimensions of human security. For instance, protection now means safeguarding not just the physical integrity but also the human dignity of the refugees.⁶⁴ After studying the implementation of human security in the camps, I found that UNHCR and its partners have not yet managed to deliver the security needed by the refugees. They are still not guaranteed "freedom from fear" and "freedom from want". When it comes to economic security the refugees do not have the possibility to be self-reliant, which becomes problematic when they need money to be able to buy necessary items that are not handed to them by UNHCR. The lack of education and vocational training due to budget constraints hinder the future generation from developing professional skills that could make them, unlike their parents, self-reliant. One of the biggest problems in the camps

⁶³ UNHCR, 2003, "An Operations Management Handbook for UNHCR's Partners", pp. 7-9, UNHCR, 2006, "Country Operations Plan 2007: Rwanda", UNHCR Branch Office Kigali, p. 3

⁶⁴ UNHCR, 2006, *The State of the World's Refugees – Human Displacement in the New Millennium*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 64-65, 84-85

is the lack of food, the rations only consist of the most basic food items which creates a need for other food to compensate such as vegetables and fruit. Not only are the rations too small, but the refugees cannot rely on them being delivered since the WFP has suffered from budget restraints and, as a result, has had to cut back on the deliveries. This makes the refugees' food insecure. The inadequate rations of food combined with the inadequate housing and sanitation and the ineffective measures for reducing the population growth add up to an unacceptable level of health security. And last but not least the personal security, which cannot be guaranteed for all of the camps' inhabitants, they are not protected from threats from neither individuals nor groups and the women and children are not being protected from various forms of abuse. This, even though the security net is widening thanks to the combined work of UNHCR and its implementation partners Save the Children and UNICEF.

The conclusion to be reached here is that there is work being done in all of the needed security areas, but it is not enough. To reach an acceptable level of human security for the refugees the food rations need to be expanded, the housing and sanitation need to be expanded and improved, the access to education and vocational training must improve, the health centers need to be expanded further and the security against inner and outer threats needs to be strengthened. The channels and knowledge needed to carry out these improvements already exist, the only problem is the funding. The financial situation for the UNHCR has led to a drastic reduction in the UNHCR budget for Rwanda, which has a significant impact on the operations in the country and has forced a strict prioritization of activities.⁶⁵ The UNHCR staff in Rwanda work closely with partners and donors to maintain the minimum standards in the camps, without the support of their partners it would be impossible for UNHCR to maintain even the minimum standard required.⁶⁶

And it is also in the cooperation with one of these partners, Save the Children, that a positive development is to be found. After initiating into their program information on the exploitation of children by the militia the staff working in the camps have found that the children seem to be listening and the ideology spread by the militia groups seems to be losing its followers. Since the program started during the first months of this year, it is too early to draw any real conclusions. But at least the general notion is that the strengthening of the children's personal security has led to an improved situation for these children since they now have a wider security net. This shows how improvements in the refugees' human security can make the camps' inhabitants less prone to the militias' campaigns, but there is still a long way to go.

The purpose of this study has been to investigate whether the UNHCR could work as a conflict inhibitor in the Great Lakes Region by breaking the vicious cycle of militias exploiting the refugee camps or not. According to the theory presented by

⁶⁵ UNHCR, 2007, "Rwanda Country Information Brief", UNHCR Branch Office Kigali, p. 10

⁶⁶ In terms of financial resources UNHCR is almost entirely dependent on voluntary contributions. Only part of UNHCR's administrative expenditures is met from the United Nations Regular Budget, which is less than 2% of UNHCR's overall resource requirements.

Achvarina and Reich actors like the UNHCR should be able to do just that by strengthening the security in the camps since the militias access to the camps is decisive when it comes to recruiting child soldiers which in turn make up for a large portion of their forces. After testing the Gihembe and Kiziba camps security level by applying the human security concept the conclusion would be that UNHCR at the present cannot work as a conflict inhibitor. But this does not mean that the potential is not there, rather the opposite. My study shows that the structures and the knowledge needed for the agency to work as a conflict inhibitor in the region are already in place, the only thing lacking is the necessary funding. So it is possible in the future, if the funding improves that the security level will do so as well and as a result of the improved security the UNHCR will be able to break the vicious cycle of the militias exploiting the camps and thereby contribute to a more secure and stable Great Lakes Region.

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