

An influx of refugees potentially engenders changes in demographic and ethnic balances that can lead to political problems and governmental concerns. Government policies and assistance programs can change local resource access, as when land is allocated for camps, or new facilities (schools, clinics, water points) are constructed. Perceptions by the local population that refugees are receiving unfair advantages, either from government policy or from international aid programs, can lead to resentment of refugees and conflict. The presence of refugees can lead to new population movements, as local people are displaced, or as newcomers move into an area to take advantage of political or economic changes. Infrastructural changes like new roads can enable the infiltration and the spread of organized crime, drug smuggling, or illegal logging.

*The next section of this paper presents a typology of security threats in RPAs and some of the standard explanations for them, along with prevailing ideas about solutions to these problems. The material is culled from the research literature and from discussion and email exchanges with colleagues in academia, the UN and NGOs. This paper contends that most of these explanations and solutions lack an adequate political contextual analysis. The framework set out above seeks to guide such an analysis.*

### **C. Types of Security Problems: Military and Non-Military Threats**

Almost all RPAs are close to regions of conflict, and many refugees and camps have been caught in cross-fire or minefields. This paper focuses on direct attacks and immediate security problems that arise mostly in camps, but outside them as well.<sup>22</sup> Two main types of threats can be identified (see Table 1 for cases). The first type, military threats, occurs when camps or refugees are directly attacked by being shelled or subjected to raids by rebel forces or regular (government) forces of the host or sending state. When camps are attacked, it is not only camp populations and relief workers who are at risk, but also surrounding communities of local people and self-settled refugees who also suffer the effects of roving gangs of armed units.

The second type, non-military threats, refers to the violence, crime and intimidation that occurs in the RPA, usually in camps, resulting from the absence or breakdown of law and order, or sometimes simply as a result of poor planning or policy. Both in and outside of camps, refugees are subject to intimidation, violence and harassment from a variety of groups and individuals. Refugee leaders who acquire control of relief distribution can abuse or intimidate other refugees in the process of distributing assistance. In the Hong Kong camps, leaders whose responsibility it was to give passes to refugees needing to leave the camp, would demand bribes or sexual favors before issuing the passes. Violence and intimidation in camps are also used for political purposes: to pressure refugees to leave the camps, or to enter them; to repatriate, or not to repatriate. The latter was widely believed to be the case in the Goma camps, where camp leaders intimidated and threatened refugees who sought to return to Rwanda.

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<sup>22</sup> For discussion of these kinds of threats, see K. Jacobsen, "Refugees as Security Threats in Sub-Saharan Africa" in M. Weiner (ed.), *International Migration and Security*, (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. 1993); E-E. Mtango, "Military and armed attacks on refugee camps," in G. Loescher and L. Monahan (eds.), *Refugees and International Relations*. (New York: Oxford University Press. 1989); B. Posen, "Military responses to refugee disasters," *International Security*, 21(1), 1996; W. Stanley, "Blessing or Menace? The Security Implications of Central American Migration," in Weiner op.cit.; UNHCR, "Military or Armed Attacks on Refugee Camps and Settlements," EXCOM Conclusions- No. 48 (XXXVII) 1989; M. Weiner, *The Global Migration Crisis: Challenges to States and Human Rights*. (HarperCollins, 1995).