

NGOs have pointed out the complicated and sometimes compromising context in which their organizations must operate.³¹ NGOs function as implementing agents for donor governments and the United Nations. These donors are often not well informed about field conditions, and impose unrealistic restrictions and inappropriate mandates on NGOs with whom they contract. Moreover, emergency situations usually do not permit time for the requisite planning to avoid all negative consequences.

E. Conclusions: Framing Questions for the Workshop

The kinds of explanations and variables set out above reflect much of the current literature that seeks to analyze refugee-related security problems. There is a strong 'solution bias', but little real analysis of the political and economic factors driving the problems.

The following questions can be distilled from this discussion paper, and are some of the ones that should structure both the case studies and the workshop:

- What are the main security threats confronting the people living in RPAs, and how are these threats special to RPAs?
- What kind of empirical information is important in understanding security problems in RPAs?
- How should we separate the security of refugees from the security threats refugees pose to host countries?
- What is the role of humanitarian relief and international intervention in security problems in RPA?
- How does the political and historical context of the RPA (as outlined in the framework above) contribute towards or mitigate against security problems?
- How does knowledge of the political context contribute towards uncovering solutions to security problems?

Some related issues not addressed in this paper, but of possible interest to the workshop are:

- the need to make a distinction between security for refugees and security for relief agency personnel. We might question whether this is a necessary and significant distinction, and whether making such a distinction would lead us in different directions, or whether it is possible to address physical protection problems more generally as a set of problems that affects everyone caught up in the RPA.
- Discussion of security problems is often blurred by the use of the expression 'security threats' to refer to national security threats, i.e., threats to the security of the host country (or the host government) from refugees.³² The safety of refugees and the ways in which refugees pose security threats to host states, are two issues that are often conflated.³³ Should these issues be

³¹ This section is taken from the Military and Humanitarianism Address to the 'Aspects of Peacekeeping' Conference by David R Smock, which can be found at the JHA website: "Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict in Africa", <http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/a/a016.htm> reposted on 4 July 1997.

³² P. Kourula, *Broadening the Edges: Refugee Definition and International Protection Revisited*. (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1997). pp.8-9, 14-15.

³³ See for example, the Secretary-General's Report on Africa (April 1998), para. 53: "the safety of refugees has increasingly become a matter of international concern, as has the security of States hosting large refugee populations..." *Refugee Studies Quarterly*, 17(2) 1998, p. 77.