

unstructured shantytown-like culture. These are ingredients for increased crime and violence, or increased likelihood of recruitment into militias or organized crime. The presence of weapons (even when hidden) increases the combustibility of the situation in and around the camps, as does the problem of bored and frustrated young men in camps, who are candidates for involvement in crime or recruitment to militias.

In such a context, it is very important to have a system of law and order in the camp that is perceived as legitimate, and where there is redress for transgressions. However, any camp system of law and order will need to be backed up by a physical security force, and the problem is, where will such a force come from? The problem of international intervention of this kind is discussed in more detail in Appendix A.

#### *4) Problems created by humanitarian assistance programs and/or host government policies.*

A current critique in the humanitarian literature concerns the effect of humanitarian assistance on the security and the political economy of RPAs.<sup>30</sup> Relief programs have sometimes exacerbated conflict and insecurity rather than contributed to peace. The most direct negative impact occurs when warring forces gain control of supplies intended for civilians, either through imposing levies or through theft. More indirectly, when international NGOs meet the needs of civilian populations, the government and rebels are freed to use their resources for war-making.

Any analysis of insecurity must explore the system of relief distribution within the camps. Control over the distribution of assistance is a means to acquire power. Food and other aid items are an important "currency" of camp life, and those who gain control over distribution seek to maintain it at all costs and with violence if necessary. Aid agencies often find it most efficient, particularly at the height of an emergency, to distribute aid through the military or political organizations associated with the refugees. These organizations have the hierarchy and supply lines to get the aid out quickly. Once this hierarchy is entrenched it is difficult to re-organize, as those who are given control do whatever they can to maintain it.

The roles played by host government authorities (such as camp guards or undisciplined police and security forces) and IGO and NGO personnel in this power matrix are important variables in explaining the security climate in camps.

Incomplete or inappropriate assistance programs in camps can also create security problems. For example, not providing fuelwood to refugees in camps means the women must travel some distance to find wood in the bush and are thus at the risk of rape or other attack. In some cases, programs that provide assistance for refugees but neglect poor local populations create resentment and further trouble down the road. Some NGOs maintain that humanitarian assistance should be provided only when local populations and factions agree to conditions that will ensure the most effective use of relief supplies.

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<sup>30</sup> See for example, African Rights, 1994. *Humanitarianism Unbound? Current Dilemmas Facing Multi-mandate Relief Operations in Political Emergencies*, Discussion Paper no 5, London; J. Macrae and A. Zwi, *War and Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies* (London: Zed Books, 1994); L. Minear, "Partnerships in the protection of refugees and other people at risk: emerging issues and work in progress." UNHCR/CDR, *New Issues In Refugee Research Working Paper No. 13*, July 1999; D. R. Smock, "Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict in Africa" <http://www-jha.sps.cam.ac.uk/a/a016.htm> reposted on 4 July 1997; T. G. Weiss & C. Collins, *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention: World Politics and the Dilemmas of Help* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).