

Zairian camps that these resources are being co-opted and misused by the hard line Hutu élite to retain their human power base in situ and to more closely control their people. At what point does UNHCR assistance move from essential relief to aiding and abetting the attempts of a few to capitalize on the misery of so many. Even if it is not as has been suggested by some a callous and calculated effort of UNHCR to keep up its involvement and power, most certainly there will be a time when UNHCR must withdraw relief support even knowing that hundreds of thousand will suffer with the calculated hope that this will precipitate a massive repatriation of refugees to Rwanda where they can be freed from the tyranny of their old leaders and encouraged to enter into dialogue and reconciliation with the new government and the returning Tutsi refugees.

The often arbitrary distinction between refugees and internally displaced persons has become particularly dysfunctional in the Rwandan context. For individuals to even suggest that UNHCR is purposely keeping the Zairian camps going rather than see the refugees return to Rwanda and become IDPs and thus outside of their mandate is disquieting. At best it is a completely false perception which while wrong, does affect how others in the UN system deal with UNHCR and for that reason alone requires resolution. At second best, the resources and initiative of UNHCR with its largely refugee focus results in inordinate resources going to refugee camps with far fewer resources as a result being available from the international community to create attractive camps and other services in Rwanda to help draw the refugees back. At worse, there may be an element of truth to claims by that some consciously or more likely subconsciously act to artificially retain the refugee load to enhance their role.

If you wish, take your pick of the optional answers above in what I would hope is largely an academic exercise of witch hunting. It is more useful to address the core issue which is the artificial distinction and the overwhelming need to expand UNHCR's mandate to include internally displaced people. Every one of UNHCR's functions can and should service the needs of IDPs. In addition, apart from the standard concerns about any UN bureaucracy there is little debate about the relative dynamism and effectiveness of UNHCR. Any discussion at this point about the resource capacity of UNHCR to handle the extra load is rather wasted since they will not attract any resources or even any firm commitments until they assume the load. No, the issue remains whether the benefits of joining of refugee programs and IDP programs under UNHCR leadership brings substantial benefits in cost benefits, consistency, and downright efficacy which outweigh the costs of merging the two. Yes they do.

RECOMMENDATION

Canada should encourage countries to view refugees and internally displaced persons as being integrally linked, and push for the mandate of UNHCR to be changed so that they are the lead UN agency for all internally and externally displaced.

IGO-NGO cooperation appears to be going very well, and there are some real success stories. For example, the Norwegian children's rights organization Redde Barne was sub-contracted to experts on child welfare to the refugee camps to log in children as they arrive and attempt family reunification and generally handle child welfare.