Refugee Enclave, Conflict and Effect on Internal Security in Kenya

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Abstract

Although refugees are victims of protracted conflicts from their home country, they can cause negative externalities in asylum states, such as a disturbed ethnic balance, food insecurity, security threats, treatises and environmental crimes. Kenya has been home to thousands of refugees in the Dadaab refugee camp introduced in 1991 to host Somali refugees fleeing the clashes and subsequent civil wars after the ouster of Siad Barre in January 1991 becoming one of the largest refugee camp in the world. However, in the 21st century   the evolution of the perception of refugee issues from being a humanitarian issue has been turned to being security a threat. The study sought to investigate refugee conflict and effect on internal security in Kenya by looking at contribution of refugees to proliferation of small arms in Kenya, environmental crimes, social, economic conflicts and the role of the National Government of Kenya and non-state actors in handling refugee issues verses security concerns which translates to respect of human rights when handling refugees issues through repatriation. This study analyzed international treaties, laws governing refugees. The study adopted societal security theory which revealed the security of societal groups coupled up with Securitization theory which contributed to where refugee issues are over securitized a situation, which prompts reaction from the government. This study used concepts from these theories to contribute to knowledge and understanding of the nexus of refugee conflict and insecurity. Secondary data was obtained from published scholarly materials, government reports, journals, newsletters and newspapers and primary data from personal interviews. It was established that criminal groups from the warring neighbouring countries such as al-shabaab are responsible for the rise of insecurity in Kenya. Since refugees are vulnerable they take advantage, to engage in illegal activities such as trafficking illegal firearms through the porous borders to the North of Kenya, which then, are used to commit crime in the country. In consideration of all circumstances notwithstanding, Kenya has a mandate: to respect and improve the international refugee instruments of protection while at the same time ensuring security for its citizens.

Keywords: Refugee, Security, Small Arms, Repatriation, Insecurity, Humanitarian, Terrorism